

# Grant Cottage Chronicles

Friends of Grant Cottage Newsletter  
Volume 40, Issue 1 Spring 2018

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

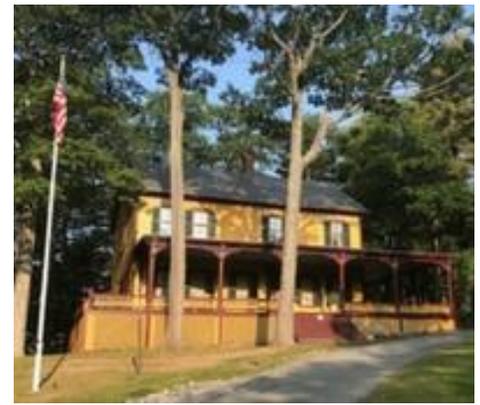
As part of the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of the Town of Wilton, Grant Cottage is planning a two-day Civil War Weekend this August on the Ballard Road property of the former Wilton Developmental Center. This special bi-centennial event will involve nearly 100 authentic Civil War reenactors, in both blue and gray, engaging in battle scenarios with infantry, cavalry and artillery skirmishes. Slated for August 11 and 12 of 2018, the event marks the time when nearly a hundred Wilton residents served in the Civil War and as special ceremony will commemorate their service.



Civil War regiments from throughout the northeast will set up an encampment on the property of The D.A. Collins Construction Company, which now owns and operates the 137-acre former special school. D.A. Collins is graciously helping to stage the Civil War Encampment on a grassy field within sight of the Cottage.

In addition to the battle scenarios, the Civil War Weekend will feature several musical groups playing tunes from that period as well as a number of noted authors who have written about critical events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Food and beverages will be provided by the Wilton Volunteer Fire Department and Blue Ribbon Express, and there will be tours provided of U.S. Grant Cottage during the weekend as part of the special \$10 admission fee. Children under 12 are admitted free. This exciting, colorful event is a way for Grant Cottage to raise money for its mission: To tell the story of how the “Man Who Saved the Union” and then 18<sup>th</sup> President spent the last six weeks of his life in Saratoga County completing his best-selling Civil War Memoir. For more information and to secure tickets in advance, visit [GrantCottage.org](http://GrantCottage.org).

Tim Welch, *President, Board of Trustees*



## SAVE THE DATE

### I Love My Park Day

Saturday, May 5, 9-11 a.m.

Registration required:

[www.grantcottage.org/events](http://www.grantcottage.org/events)

### New Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, May 5, 1-3 p.m.

For more information email  
[ben@grantcottage.org](mailto:ben@grantcottage.org)

### Returning Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m.

### New Tour Guide Training

Saturday, May 19, 1 p.m.

For more information email  
[ben@grantcottage.org](mailto:ben@grantcottage.org)

### Cottage Opens for the Season

Saturday, May 26

### Ronald C. White, Author of

*American Ulysses* presents  
“Ulysses S. Grant: A New Vision  
for the American Leadership”

Saturday, June 9, 3 p.m.

### Civil War Weekend

August 11 and 12

Tickets \$10 per person, FREE  
for kids 12 and under, available at  
[www.GrantCottage.org](http://www.GrantCottage.org), in the  
Visitor Center, or at the event.

See more information about up-  
coming events inside this issue!

# FRIENDS OF GRANT COTTAGE MEMBERSHIP

**W**e are pleased to announce new benefits for Friends of Grant Cottage members!

Along with free entry to Grant Cottage, a ten percent discount in the gift shop, and an invitation to our annual meeting, members will now receive exclusive reciprocal membership benefits at hundreds of historical institutions throughout the United States through the Time Travelers program.

Administered by The Missouri History Museum, Time Travelers is a reciprocal membership network for historical museums and

societies. By showing your Friends of Grant Cottage membership card at participating organizations, you will receive benefits such as free or reduced admission, gift shop discounts, free parking, and much more. The Missouri History Museum releases quarterly lists for museums and their members to help them take advantage of these special offers. For a up-to-date list of participating institutions, visit [www.timetravelers.mohistory.com](http://www.timetravelers.mohistory.com).

We have also added additional benefits for specific membership levels. Take a look at the membership enrollment form below to

view the benefits associated with each level. You can easily upgrade your membership level if you are interested in benefits at a new level. Email [info@grantcottage.org](mailto:info@grantcottage.org) for more information.

If you've already paid for your membership this year using the old levels, don't worry, your membership is still valid and includes all of the new membership benefits. If you haven't yet renewed or would like to join, please use the form below, or pay online at [www.grantcottage.org/membership](http://www.grantcottage.org/membership).

## Membership at All Levels Includes:

- Free admission to Grant Cottage
- 10% discount in the Gift Shop
- Reciprocal benefits through the Time Travelers program

## Select a Level

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Senior Citizen – Membership for one senior
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Individual – Membership for an individual
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$35 Senior Couple – Membership for two seniors
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Family/Grandparent – Membership for two adults plus admission for all children/grandchildren under 18
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Patron – All family/grandparent benefits plus admission for two additional adults per visit
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 Sponsor – All patron benefits plus admission for four additional guests per visit
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$500 Corporate – All sponsor benefits plus private tour for up to twelve
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000 Benefactor – All corporate benefits plus an educational program

\_\_\_\_\_ *I would like to add an additional tax-deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support Grant Cottage.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_



Please make check payable to: *Friends of Grant Cottage*.  
Mail to: Friends of Grant Cottage, P.O. Box 2294, Wilton, NY 12831

## FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

The Friends of Grant Cottage have achieved remarkable goals in the past year. We have provided programs for school children both at the Cottage and within the schools. We have provided historical programs related to Grant at local libraries. We have participated in local book fairs and historical events to increase public awareness of Grant Cottage. We have collaborated with a classes from St Rose and Skidmore to explore the ways to present the Grant story in many media forums. We invited Leadership Saratoga to study our organization and to make suggestions for our future development. We were selected as a Literary Landmark site, and one of the editors of the new annotated edition of the Grant memoirs provided the address at the dedication in September. We had the assistance of a Skidmore intern who constructed a web map of the national Grant sites which we will display on our new website. Our porch chats occurred weekly and were well attended. Many of the presentations were made by our own staff and volunteers. Finally, your Board has worked diligently, along with our executive director, to implement these efforts and form a new strategic plan this past January in order to map our dynamic future.

None of this could possibly have happened without the invaluable help of these people and our volunteers who offered 1450 hours of donated time. As your treasurer I observe all these creative, yet time-consuming activities and marvel at how all this is taking place on very limited funds. Our budget expenditures are approximately \$75,000.00 per year, and this includes the nearly 60% allocated for our four part-time staff. We invite our members and friends to join us in our efforts to make the Grant story more fully known through your attendance and contributions. Our enthusiasm is high and our attendance is breaking records. We look forward to an exciting 2018 season.

John M Myers, *Treasurer*



Twain and Grant (Steve Trimm and Kevin O'Brien) at our Literary Landmark dedication in Sept.

## EDUCATION UPDATE

Grant Cottage volunteers and staff reached out to more than 1,000 students last season. Elementary classroom visitations were provided by Steve Trimm who portrayed Ulysses S. Grant. As a part of our October Encampment, more than 600 fifth grade students talked with a living historians from Gettysburg at the Glens Falls Middle School auditorium.

Teachers from five school districts brought their students to our historic site in June. Five learning stations gave students an opportunity to learn about our 18<sup>th</sup> President and Civil War hero.

Field trip opportunities are important because the story of U.S. Grant includes a number of essential American themes: determination, perseverance, peace, Civil Rights and authorship. Chris Cashin, Steve Betts, Kevin Meachem, Mike Lesser, Diana O'Brien. Kathy Fomuk, Steve Trimm, Hady Finch and Jack Myers are working now on materials for use in the upcoming season.

Harriet Finch, *Trustee*

### Join us as a Grant Cottage volunteer!

Volunteer positions are available for adults and students age 14 and up. Positions include:

- Tour Guide
- Visitor Center Greeter
- Parking Attendant

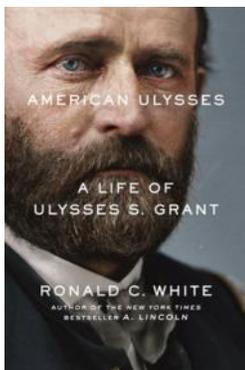
Visit [www.GrantCottage.org/volunteer](http://www.GrantCottage.org/volunteer) or email [ben@grantcottage.org](mailto:ben@grantcottage.org) for more information.



# GRANT COTTAGE PROGRAMS & EVENTS

## Oliver and Martha Clarke Welcome You

Sunday, May 27, 1 p.m.  
Reenactors Steve Trimm and Melissa Trombley-Prosch will portray Grant Cottage caretakers Oliver and Martha Clarke and share reflections on their life together on Mt. McGregor in the setting of Memorial Day 1907.



**Ulysses S. Grant: A New Vision for the American Leadership**  
Saturday, June 9, 3 p.m.  
Author Ronald C. White will present a program based on his best-selling

biography, *American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant*. As a biographer, White writes from the inside out, seeking to get inside the mind and spirit of this generous, curious, self-effacing, introspective leader. He will offer three episodes from Grant's life – Civil War, presidency, and the writing of his memoirs in his final illness – that we might understand why in his time Grant was routinely grouped with George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in the pantheon of great American leaders. A book signing will be held at the conclusion of the program. The event is made possible by a David H. Porter Memorial Grant from the Adirondack Trust Community Fund.

## The Most Talked of Man in the Country

Sunday, June 10, 1 p.m.

The story of Elmer Ellsworth will be told by Paul Perreault, Town of Malta Historian and former member of the Friends of Grant Cottage Board of Trustees.



## Theodore Roosevelt's Night Ride to the Presidency

Saturday, June 16, 1 p.m.  
Jonathan Duda, the great-great grandson of local Adirondack hero Michael Cronin, will tell the story of the man who transported Roosevelt to the North Creek train station on his way to become President.

## A Visit with General and Mrs. Grant

Saturday, June 23, 1 p.m.  
Reenactors Steve Trimm and Melissa Trombley-Prosch will interpret the life of this special couple through anecdotes and stories in the setting of one of their last visits to Saratoga Springs in 1882.



"Family group by Willem C. Duyster (c. 1631-1633), courtesy of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam."

## Slavery in Dutch New York 1626-1664

Saturday, June 30, 1 p.m.  
Curator Travis Bowman will present the role of slavery played in the formation and growth of the West India Company and how the Company's Atlantic slave trading activities affected the colonists of Dutch New York.

## A Veteran Speaks: Oscar Kemp of the 115th NY and the Grand Army

Saturday, July 7, 1 p.m.  
Civil War veteran Oscar Kemp (portrayed by descendant and Grant Cottage staff member Ben Kemp) will recount his war experiences with the 115th NY and discusses the experience of veterans after the war.

## Show-and-Tell a Good Story

Sunday, July 15, 1 p.m.  
Grant Cottage tour guide Steve Trimm will share stories related to his collection of Civil War and U.S. Grant memorabilia.

## Grant Remembrance Day

Sunday, July 22, 1 p.m.  
It has become a tradition at Grant Cottage to mark this somber occasion by recreating the Grant family circle and allowing those who loved him most to speak about Grant the husband, father and grandfather.



## General Grant's "Write Hand Man"

Tuesday, July 24, 1 p.m.  
Tour guide Steve Trimm will discuss Noble Dawson, the stenographer who became Grant's indispensable aide and friend, and Camp Ford, Texas, the prison camp where he was imprisoned.

## Winsor Brown French, the Soldier, the Lawyer, the Man

Sunday, July 29, 1 p.m.  
Engaging storyteller Gloria May will explain how Winsor French's accomplishments are still part of Saratoga today and what part he played in Grant's funeral on Mount McGregor on August 4, 1885.



## It Began with Danny Ammen

Tuesday, July 31, 1 p.m.  
Tour guide Steve Trimm invites you to hear the epic tale of Admiral Ammen., the childhood friend who saved Grant's life.

# GRANT COTTAGE PROGRAMS & EVENTS



**The Man Who Baptized Grant**  
Saturday, August 4, 1 p.m.  
Grant Cottage Site Manager Dave Hubbard will outline the life of the Reverend Dr. John Philip Newman, clergyman,

popular orator, author and world traveler, through his life's religious and political activities.

## **Winning the Peace: Ulysses S. Grant, The Election of 1868, and the Meaning of the Civil War**

Sunday, August 5, 1 p.m.

Andre M. Fleche, associate professor of history at Castleton University, reflects on the ways that Grant's ultimately successful candidacy cemented the legacy of Union and emancipation, thereby shaping the meaning of the Civil War.

## **General Grant Smiles**

Tuesday, August 7, 1 p.m.

Grant Cottage tour guide Steve Trimm will share examples of the stories and incidents

Grant found amusing.



## **Grant Cottage Civil War Weekend**

Sat, Aug 11 & Aug 12, at DA Collins  
Nearly 100 authentic Civil War reenactors, both Blue & Gray with cannons booming, cavalry clashing and educational fun and excitement for the entire family. Tickets \$10 per person or FREE for kids 12 and under, available at [www.GrantCottage.org](http://www.GrantCottage.org), at the Grant Cottage Visitor Center, or at the event. This event is possible thanks to generous support from D.A. Collins, The Town of Wilton, Stewart's Shops, and Scotty's.

## **Ulysses Grant III: Maintaining a Family Legacy**

Tuesday, August 14, 1 p.m.

Grant Cottage Site Coordinator Ben Kemp will examine Ulysses Grant III's extraordinary life starting as a young boy on the steps of his grandfather's final home at Mt. McGregor to becoming a Major General in the US Army striving to preserve the heritage of his family and his country.



## **Rails to Saratoga Springs and Mt. McGregor**

Sunday, August 19, 1 p.m.

Join Dr. Richard Chait, author (and Distinguished Research Fellow at the National Defense University), as he brings back area images of the bygone era of Saratoga railroads.

## **The Best Hated Man in America**

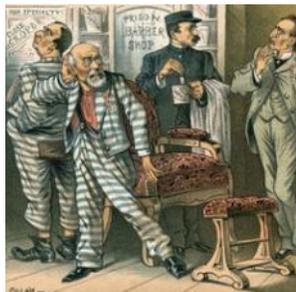
Tuesday, August 21, 1 p.m.

Grant Cottage Site Manager Dave Hubbard will examine Ferdinand Ward's life, from his beginnings in western New York State, to his financial career, criminal activities, his connections to the Grants and their financial ruin, and his time in prison.

## **The Rise and Fall of James Dean Fish**

Saturday, August 25, 1 p.m.

Amy Halsted, the great-great granddaughter of Fish, will tell her ancestor's story, involving a gifted young actress, a mysterious trunk, U.S. Grant, and whole lot of scandal.



June 12, 1863:

## **The Day the War Stopped**

Tuesday, August 28, 1 p.m.

Oliver Batcheller of Saratoga portrayed by Steve Trimm, will tell the story of John Hart of Schenectady, who commanded a Union gunboat on the Mississippi River, and the Southern town that honored him in 1863.

## **Men of Steel:**

### **Submarines in the Civil War**

Saturday, September 8, 1 p.m.

CDR Tory Swanson, USN (Ret.), will discuss submarine use during the Civil War, challenges to submarine research and development, and the innovations that led to some of the naval technology now used in our submarine force.

## **Let Us Have Peace**

Sunday, September 16, 1 p.m.

General Grant, portrayed by Steve Trimm, will share thoughts about how societies and individuals might contribute to peace-making and explain why "Let Us Have Peace" became the cry of his heart. This program is inspired by International Day of Peace, held on September 21.

*For full descriptions of these programs, please visit [www.GrantCottage.org](http://www.GrantCottage.org).*

*The suggested donation for Grant Cottage programs is \$5 per person.*

*These programs and events are possible thanks to generous support from the Adirondack Trust Community Fund, the Town of Wilton, Stewart's Shops and Scotty's.*

## THE STALWART LADIES OF GRANT COTTAGE

When I was in the Cottage's basement recently, I couldn't help but recall how matter-of-factly caretaker Martha Clarke and her unofficially adopted daughter Suye Narita had dealt with the challenges of living on Mount McGregor.

Suye, a Japanese immigrant who entered the U.S. in 1907, had joined the Clarke family in 1914 at the age of 13 when she arrived for treatment of her tuberculosis at the newly opened Metropolitan Life Insurance Sanitarium. The young girl, separated from her biological family, fell in love with the mountain and formed a loving bond with the childless Clarkes. Suye was eventually pronounced cured at the age of eighteen and by that time had found a permanent home and employment on the mountain.

Martha (called Josie by family and friends) found herself a widow at the age of 70 when her husband Oliver (O.P.) died on May 13, 1917. At the time of his death, she had spent twenty-seven years working at O.P.'s side, giving tours and caring for the Cottage. Martha had become an expert on the Civil War, a Grant historian in her own right, and kept an impressive reference library in the family quarters on the second floor. Her knowledge, experience and strength of character convinced the trustees of the Mount McGregor Memorial Association to hire her as the next caretaker – not a small accomplishment in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when women still did not have the right to vote.

Life at Grant Cottage in 1917 meant there was no running water or electricity. Those utilities had been provided seasonally during the Hotel Balmoral years until it burned in 1897. A two-story lavatory lean-to addition had been built onto the Cottage for Grant's 1885 visit and operated by gravity flow from the hotel's water supply at the top of the hill. The Clarke family used a toilet with a removable pail until a chemical toilet was installed in the lean-to addition around 1928. The water supply for domestic and drinking purposes was supplied by collecting rain water falling from the roof into a cistern. The difficulty in establishing a water supply from the sanitarium to the Cottage was documented by the State in correspondence dated 1928: "About 325 feet of trench is required to pipe water from Sanitarium to Cottage. Of this, 65 feet is solid rock right to the surface but in remainder it will be possible to trench 1 foot deep without encountering rock."

Although the house had been partially wired for electric lights in 1885, there had been no electrical service available since 1897; kerosene lamps were used instead. There also was no telephone service at the Cottage until the late 1920's.



Martha Clarke and Suye Narita

In 1930, lightning struck the Cottage. A letter of June 26 recounting the incident notes: "A sharp thunderstorm last week struck the aerial to the radio and broke one of the tubes. The lightning protector to the telephone was blown all over the kitchen. Mr. Frick thinks those wires saved the house. There was no fire from either."

The kitchen used by the Clarkes was the southwest room used by Grant's male nurses as a bedroom in 1885. The room's original door was solid wood and was so ill-fitted that cold drafts and rain entering the room were ongoing problems. It was not replaced with a proper-fitting door (with a window to allow more light into the kitchen) until 1931. Storm windows were placed on the Cottage that same year.

The coal burning furnace was the original one installed in 1890. Martha notes to a state official in a 1929 letter: "Doctor Ordway is distressed [sic] because we have had so much gas from the furnace – thinks maybe a large part of my

## STALWART LADIES CONT'D

illness comes from that. We have had a great deal this spring, and it did nearly kill the canaries." The Cottage chimney was rebuilt later that year to address the problem of ongoing coal gas leakage.

In a letter dated February 9, 1933, Frederick Richards, the Secretary-Treasurer of the New York State Historical Association wrote to a state official: "The reason for my inquiry was a most pathetic tale told to me about the primitive conditions at Grant's Cottage, no running water or conveniences of many sorts, and the only inmates being an aged woman too old to do much work and a little Japanese girl who had to do it all, including stoking the heater, lugging up the ashes, etc., etc."

As the Mount McGregor Memorial Association had become less active, New York State increased its oversight of the Cottage. The follow-up letter to Richards noted: "There are many things at Mount McGregor which, were it not for the fact that Mrs. Clarke is the widow of the former G.A.R. caretaker and opposed to any change whatever, I would be glad to make. She feels that everything, including the dilapidated curtains, loose wallpaper, worn-out rugs, etc., should be kept exactly as they were at the time of General Grant's death and although she appreciates that these articles must be renewed, she has often expressed the thought that she would prefer to see any renovation deferred until after her death."

Martha recorded in a 1934 letter that visitor feedback reflected her conviction that the Cottage should remain in its original state as much

as possible: "Many times I have been told by visitors that they like to come here better than to many other historic places they have visited because it has not been restored, but is just as it was originally."



Suye Narita

Suye made an unsuccessful attempt to become an American citizen in 1938 through U.S. Congressional legislation. The bill was never allowed to come to a vote, despite her testimony before the House Immigration Committee in February of that year. In failing health, Martha died on August 11, 1941 at the age of 93. Suye was appointed temporary custodian on August 14. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7 of that year, beginning U.S. involvement in WWII. Suye was designated an enemy alien and interned on Mount McGregor for the duration of the war. She never wavered in her commitment to her adopted country (finally being allowed to become a U.S. citizen in 1953) or to Grant Cottage, later permanently entrusted to her care. Subsequent generations owe a great deal to these two stalwart ladies.

Melissa Trombley-Prosch  
*Site Historian and  
Programming Committee Chairperson*

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Looking at the plans we have for our upcoming season, it's easy to see how important our members, volunteers, and community partners are to Grant Cottage.

Our calendar is full of educational porch chats developed by the hard-working volunteers on our Programming Committee. Best-selling author Ronald C. White is slated to speak at the Cottage on Saturday, June 9 thanks to the David H. Porter Memorial Grant from Adirondack Trust Community Fund and the generosity of Saratoga Arms. Planning for our Civil War Weekend is underway, with sponsorships from D.A. Collins, Stewarts Shops, Scotty's and the Town of Wilton. Several school groups are scheduled to visit the Cottage this spring. Students will visit interactive learning stations developed and facilitated by volunteers. Funds from Stewart's Holiday Match support our education program. We are also awaiting National Historic Landmark designation, funded by the Town of Moreau. A charitable trust in Virginia is also supporting this year's programs and operations.

Our new employee, Emily Kane, is beginning her work as Development and Events Assistant. This position is supported with funding from the New York State Park and Trail Partnership Program (NYSPTPP) and New York's Environmental Protection Fund. The NYSPTPP is administered by Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Our daily operations are possible because of your generous membership support and our wonderful volunteer tour guides who tell the U.S. Grant's story to thousands of people who visit the Cottage each year.

Melissa Swanson, *Executive Director*



FRIENDS OF GRANT COTTAGE  
P.O. BOX 2294  
WILTON, NY 12831

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ULYSSES S. GRANT COTTAGE

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# U.S. Grant Cottage

# CIVIL WAR WEEKEND

Camp Life • Entertainment • Reenactments

A Wilton Bicentennial Celebration



Saturday & Sunday  
Aug. 11 & 12, 2018

Tickets \$10  
Free for kids 12 and under  
[www.GrantCottage.org](http://www.GrantCottage.org)

