

GRANT

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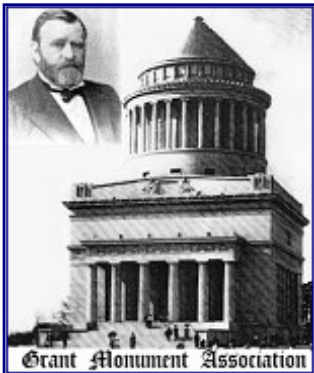
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GRANT

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GMA MEETS WITH NPS MANAGEMENT

Marking the start of a promising new relationship, members of the board of the GMA met with the new superintendent of the Manhattan Sites Unit, Maria Burks, and other National Park Service officials on August 27, 2007, to discuss various issues facing Grant's Tomb. Also representing the NPS were William McLaughlin, chief of partnership and business development, and Darren Boch, public affairs officer for area parks.

Among the issues raised by the GMA at the meeting were

- Ongoing concern that around-the-clock security be maintained at the site;
- Restoration of the deteriorating grounds around the monument, as well as concerns about insufficient lighting and the need to remove the mosaic benches around the site;
- The need for a transfer of city-owned land around the Tomb to the NPS;
- Concerns that special events at the Tomb be appropriate, along with the GMA's interest in furthering such events;
- The lack of access to the site for the handicapped; and
- The need for an adequate visitor center with restrooms.

Perhaps the most time at the meeting was devoted to the issues of access for the handicapped and the related issue of the visitor center. As discussed in previous issues of this newsletter, the NPS had explored converting the dilapidated overlook pavilion across the street into a facility that could be used by visitors. The plans being considered in 2007 by the NPS entailed a visitor contact for the public, four restroom fixtures (two

for men, two for women), and office space. The space, however, would be cramped and inaccessible, even if the City of New York could follow through on a proposal to install a ramp. Neither a ramp nor a glass-enclosed elevator, an idea previously explored by the NPS, would be feasible. This point was ably conveyed by Garland Reynolds, an architect based in Gainesville, Georgia, and chairman of the GMA's Building Committee. Mr. Reynolds presented a report on the issue of general access for the handicapped at the site that noted steps that need to be explored to bring the Tomb within compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These steps include the installation of an elevator that could bring staff and visitors to the main level of the Tomb at the southeast corner. That corner once contained a spiral staircase (matching another staircase on the southwest corner) that has since been partially removed to make room for an administrative office.

While further planning efforts still await the NPS and the GMA, Mr. Reynolds' report was believed to be effective not only in beginning to enact a solution to the access issue, but also in conveying that the overlook pavilion's restoration and establishment of an adequate visitor center are not one and the same goal. (The dominant thought within the GMA is that a restored pavilion would best be devoted to providing facilities to NPS personnel while a visitor center should be more spacious and on the same side of the street as the Tomb.)

Superintendent Burks noted two special funding initiatives in the near future that are hoped to be of benefit to area parks: the 2009 Quadcentennial of Henry Hudson's exploration of the river that

Other Developments at Grant's Tomb

Besides the eventful August meeting, 2007 also witnessed other happenings at Grant's Tomb. During the official Grant birthday ceremony on April 27, the NPS announced that Grant's Tomb would have expanded open hours: the site is now open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily.

—On April 29, site manager Chris Keenan announced that after years in which GMA members and others advocated the acquisition of a presidential flag to display at Grant's Tomb, the staff finally had obtained one. The announcement came at the Grant birthday observance of the Oliver Tilden Camp #26 of the Sons of Union Veterans. The flag was acquired at the initiative of the site staff: although such flags can run well over \$1,000 when embroidered on silk, this one was purchased personally by three rangers on staff—Mr. Keenan, Charles Kahlstrom, and

Edward Mucci—off the online auction site ebay for \$4.99.

—For the second consecutive year, the GMA joined the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Association in a memorial walk from the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on 89th Street and Riverside Drive to Grant's Tomb 33 blocks north. The ceremonies

concluded with the tossing of flowers into the crypt by those in attendance—an old tradition revived at the monument after the site staff uncovered a Decoration Day program at the Tomb from an earlier era. Special thanks to George Chall for his tireless work in organizing the Memorial Day function. The tradition is expected to be continued with a similar observance on Memorial Day 2008.

—After almost 18 years with the NPS, most of it spent as site manager at Grant's Tomb, Chris Keenan moved on in August to become a park supervisor with the Connecticut state park system. The GMA extends its thanks to Chris for his years of enthusiastic service as caretaker of Grant's Tomb.

—The GMA also extends a warm welcome to the new site manager, Albert Atchison, who shares oversight of Grant's Tomb and Hamilton Grange, the home of Alexander Hamilton.



Chris Keenan and Larry Clowers (portraying General Grant) display a presidential flag following the Sons of Union Veterans observance of Grant's birthday on April 29.

THE SONS OF UNION

VETERANS, OLIVER TILDEN CAMP #26, WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF ULYSSES S. GRANT AT GRANT'S TOMB ON SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 2008, BEGINNING AT

Grant and the Election of 1880 (part 1 of 2)

During this hotly contested presidential election season, the GMA looks back on one of the most contentious battles for a presidential nomination in U.S. history: the Republican contest of 1880, which included an ill-fated attempt to nominate Grant to a third term three years after he retired from the presidency. The following, part 1 of a 2-part feature, is taken from an exploration of the subject by GMA secretary Scott Berman that can be read in full on www.grantstomb.org, the GMA website:

Following the presidential electoral crisis of 1876-77, President Grant presided over what turned out to be a peaceful transition of power. With Rutherford B. Hayes sworn in as president in March 1877 without incident, the ex-president set out on a two-and-a-half-year world tour. President Hayes withdrew the last

remaining federal troops from the South in 1877, sent troops to quell a railroad strike later that year, and engaged in a high-profile fight over patronage with Grant allies in the Republican Party. Those allies, who constituted the so-called "Stalwart" wing of the party, were in an unlikely chorus with many anti-Grant Republicans, who criticized President Hayes as a fence-sitter.

Dissatisfaction with Hayes, significant Democratic successes in the 1878 midterm elections, and Grant's popularity, rekindled by news accounts of his global journey, converged to ensure that Grant's name would be put forward for the Republican nomination.

Grant never declared or disavowed a presidential candidacy in 1880. But he was willing to do some things to create

options for himself. He toured Illinois, Arkansas, and Texas on the eve of the Republican state conventions there—activity that signified more than anything else Grant's willingness to make appearances, albeit at legitimately non-political events such as such as veterans' reunions, which could be helpful to the campaign on his behalf.

During Grant's world tour, Hayes was blasted for abandoning the southern GOP. Grant felt his candidacy would have the larger purpose of ending the North-South sectional strife. The Grant boom continued during the summer and fall of 1879. When the ex-president returned to the United

Lady Bird Johnson, widow of President Lyndon B. Johnson, died on July 11, 2007. The Johnson family has asked that those wishing to



CLAUDIA TAYLOR (LADY BIRD) JOHNSON
1912 - 2007

honor Mrs. Johnson's memory consider a memorial contribution to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Endowment Fund, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739.

1880 ELECTION: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

States in September 1879, he was welcomed by immense torch-lit processions and banquets in cities from San Francisco to Philadelphia. The public's enthusiasm surprised Grant's opponents, his supporters, and the ex-president himself.

Grant's supporters were tactically well equipped. The canvas on his behalf was managed by the so-called Triumvirate of senators: Roscoe Conkling of New York, Donald Cameron of Pennsylvania, and John Logan of Illinois, who headed up the three largest delegations to the national convention.

But there were high hurdles. There were harsh critics among the rank and file as well as the press. There were other candidates, including Sen. James G. Blaine, a key member of the so-called "Half-Breed" faction of the Republican Party. The pro-Grant Stalwarts, who were critical of Hayes' abandonment of Reconstruction, emphasized the enforcement of civil rights legislation in the South. Half-Breeds, whose ranks included Hayes, Rep. James A. Garfield, and Treasury Secretary John Sherman, had as a top priority civil service reform, though some have seen this stance more as a competition with the Stalwarts over patronage than as true reform.

That he did not declare his candidacy or openly campaign does not diminish the fact that Grant was a viable candidate in 1880, with a significant organization and nationwide support. Nor do these things diminish the unprecedented nature of the phenomenon: no president had ever been nominated for a third term, or even had such an extensive effort made by supporters to secure a third nomination.

Grant followed the course of the 1880

campaign on his behalf fairly closely—motivated at least as much by anxiety about the demands of another term as by a desire to attain it. He was willing to serve. While Grant never discussed the race publicly, he privately wanted the nomination, talking freely among friends about the details.

Most of Grant's delegate totals in 1880 came from Southern states. Some of his supporters in the rest of the country, most notably Conkling, boosted Grant by "waving the bloody shirt," or



Thomas LeClerc's portrait of Grant, c. 1880

conjuring up memories of the war, and alleging Southern transgressions in Congress. By the national convention in June, the South, a region that the Republican Party had little hope of winning in the fall, provided 58% of Grant's support on the first ballot.

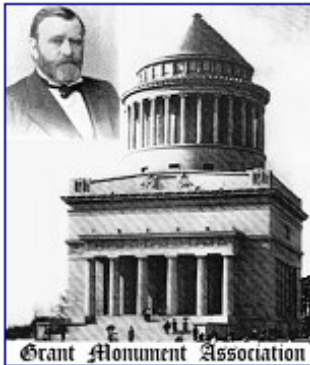
There is another intriguing and usually overlooked facet to this campaign: Grant's own personal participation. In the spring of 1880, Grant appeared at welcoming ceremonies in various states

that factored in the Republican nomination process that year, at times passing through them on travels elsewhere. On the advice of Elihu Washburne, he toured Illinois as the party was gearing up for county primaries, starting in Cairo and working his way up to Galena. He also followed Washburne's advice to go to Galveston, Texas, in March, just as the Republicans were selecting delegates for the state convention.

Grant's own activity aside, the states represented by the Triumvirate—Pennsylvania, New York, and Illinois—were the most significant and telling battlegrounds of the effort on his behalf. In February, Grant's supporters narrowly won at the Pennsylvania state convention in Harrisburg, but the victory was the result of a selection process that hinged on the unit rule, a winner-take-all tactic that would require delegates to vote in blocks, no matter how close the vote.

The battle shifted to Conkling's New York for that state convention in Utica in late February. There again, the party mechanism produced another narrow win. Conkling was front and center, managing the effort through to success and including language in the state party platform that Grant was the candidate "most certain to be elected" and "lawfully and peacefully seated." Supporters of Blaine and Sherman in Utica disputed some credentials and the overall selection process, while Grant supporters called for party unity.

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COMMANDERY OF THE MILITARY ORDER
OF THE LOYAL LEGION (MOLLUS) FOR
ITS GENEROUS SUPPORT IN BRINGING
THIS NEWSLETTER TO YOU. SINCE
1865, UNION OFFICERS AND THEIR
DESCENDANTS HAVE WORKED THROUGH
MOLLUS TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY
OF THE STRUGGLE FOR THE UNION.

NPS MEETING: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bears his name will benefit area parks, and a broad proposed increase for all national parks by 2016, the year of the Centennial of the creation of the NPS.

Following the August 27 meeting, the NPS responded with a letter to GMA President Ed Hochman asking the GMA what assistance it could offer in developing detailed engineering studies and drawings to facilitate planning for improved access for visitors in light of limited NPS resources. In response, the GMA is organizing a team of experts to prepare a more comprehensive study

from which action can be taken: besides Mr. Reynolds, the team includes landscape ecologist Halsted Welles; structural engineer Larry Bowman; CAD consultant Vic Williams; and construction consultant Wajdi Atallah.

After a relationship with the NPS that was often adversarial during the 1990's, this development provides a remarkable opportunity for a collaborative relationship between the agency and the GMA. If you have feedback on this initiative, please share your thoughts with us.



The Grant Monument Association

cordially invites you to join the

*United States Military Academy
at West Point*

and the

National Park Service

at 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 27, 2008

at

Grant's Tomb

in ceremonies commemorating the

186th Anniversary of the Birth of

President Ulysses S. Grant.

*Grant's Tomb is located at
Riverside Drive and West 122 Street
in New York City.*

*For further information, you may
contact the staff at Grant's Tomb at
(212) 666-1640.*