

Book Marks

Volume 1, Issue 1

August 2001

Grant's Return

The metamorphosis of a President

Jeffrey Marks

The only thing in history that is set in stone seems to be the pyramids. For the rest of modern recorded history, the perceptions and insights of historians can change over time, allowing a once maligned man to have a renaissance of sorts. For example, look how the recent biography of John Adams has reformed his stature as a president. Or how the results of DNA testing have cast doubts on the character of Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemming and his ideals of freedom and women.

Grant's image

While Grant is largely remembered today for his Civil War victories and graft-filled presidency, his reputation has been redeemed somewhat as of late. When I travel for the mysteries, I often hear from readers who question my vision of Grant.

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Irony

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second U.S. Grant mystery, *Good Soldier*, will be released from Overmountain Press in August of

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They remember the high school mentions of him, and are amazed to learn that he has been somewhat rehabilitated by historians of late.

For example, in regard to his drinking, rumors followed Grant from his stint in California to the end of his life. Most likely, his alcohol troubles were the reason behind his resignation from the Army in the 1850s, but Grant had spent three long years without his family and had not been permitted a leave to see his second son.

Still the generals in the Civil War told tales on each other like schoolchildren. Several of the generals of the war were politicians who wanted a command to bolster their chances for higher office. So if things didn't go the way they wanted, they merely went to Washington to plead their case.

The generals' pettiness didn't end with the war. Most of the surviving generals wrote a memoir of the war, and to bolster their own war record, they tore down the reputation of the other commanders. Grant, as the head of the Union army, took his fair share of abuse. Any error in battle, any fall from a horse suddenly became the result of drinking. The generals' written accounts cemented the rumors that he drank constantly. In his own account of the war, Grant doesn't mention any battles with the demon alcohol.

There's no evidence that Grant made any military blunders that were a result of alcohol. He seemed to be in full command of his senses in battle. Still rumors would start whenever he made a military blunder. His superiors heard talk of drink when Grant was surprised at Shiloh, and again when Grant fell off his horse just prior to the Chattanooga campaign.

Yet, in recent years, historians have come to believe that Grant wasn't the typical alcoholic who spent all his time in a boozy stupor. More than likely, he was a binge drinker, a man who could go months without alcohol, and then go on a bender that could last for a day or more. From what historians can tell, most of the episodes occurred when Grant as separated from Julia who

was both wife and best friend to him.

In one instance, Grant went out on a riverboat with a friend and spent an evening most likely imbibing and then sleeping it off the next day. Even so, most of his contemporaries who fought in his camp were extremely loyal to their general and never mentioned the incidents in depth. In fact, one member of his staff, John Rawlins, was a devout religious man and teetotaler who monitored Grant for the four years of war. He watched for any signs of Grant imbibing or looking like he might.

For more on Grant's drinking and other historical details that are constantly in flux, you can refer to the host of new Grant biographies, including:

Personal Memoirs by Ulysses S. Grant

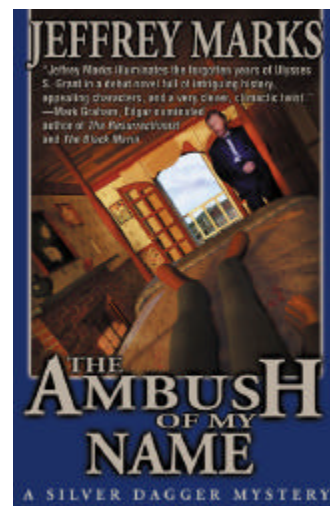
Grant by Jean Edward Smith

Grant Takes Command by Bruce Catton

Cigars, Whiskey & Winning : Leadership Lessons from General Ulysses S. Grant by Al Kaltman

Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph Over Adversity, 1822-1865 by Brooks D. Simpson

The General and the Journalists : Ulysses S. Grant, Horace Greeley, and Charles Dana by Harry J. Maihafer



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENTS

September 15th, Joseph Beth Booksellers in Rookwood Pavilion, Local Author Day

October 4th, Barnes and Noble, Tri-county, World's Largest Writers Workshop, held in conjunction with F&W publications.

October 11-12, Southern Festival of Books, Nashville, TN (www.tn-humanities.org/sfbmain.htm)

October 22nd, Lecture at the Clermont County Library in Milford

October 27th, Barnes and Noble, Pickerington, (new store in Columbus, OH)

November 2-4, Bouchercon, Washington DC (http://www.bouchercon2001.com/2001_awards.html)

November 13th, Mystery Group at Borders Northgate, 7pm

November 17th, Kentucky Book Fair, Frankfort, KY.

November 28th, Foul Play, Westerville, OH 7 p.m.

March 22-24th, Left Coast Crime, Portland, OR

April 19th and 20th, Southern Kentucky Festival of Books, Bowling Green, KY

Ellery, my companion and the owner of my home!



2002. The story picks up shortly after Grant's departure from Georgetown, Ohio, and follows him to Bethel, a hamlet about 15 miles from Georgetown. When he arrives, Grant discovers that all of his friends from his West Point Days have struck it rich. It's even more unbelievable since the group of friends had spent most of the war in Andersonville, the notorious prisoner of war camp.

When Grant's childhood chums start dying at a fast pace, he decides to look into the matter and find out what is behind their sudden wealth – and their equally sudden deaths.

I've already started researching the third book in the Grant series, which will be set in Cincinnati. The murder of a former slave sets the city on edge. When Grant thinks he sees the man's ghost, he decides to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Finally, I'll be releasing the start of a second mystery series later in 2002. The book, *The Scent of Murder*, was the Malice Domestic Grant winner a few years back, and is being released by Delphi Books, the same publisher that did *Who Was That Lady?* (the Craig Rice biography). This mystery novel is a departure from the Grant series. It's set in contemporary times in Cincinnati. Marissa Scott is a divorced mother of one, and the head of the cosmetics department at Kantor's Department stores. When Marissa finds her ex-husband's fiancée dead at her desk, she is forced to investigate the murder to save her own skin.

In 2003 – *Criminal Appetites*, a cooking mystery anthology complete with recipes.

NOT the Tony Awards

Magnolias and Mayhem, my 3rd mystery anthology, was nominated for an Anthony Award for best mystery anthology, the honors given out by the Bouchercon (world mystery convention) people. The awards banquet isn't until November 3rd, but I'm still pretty excited about it. My story in *M&M* features the 2nd appearance of U.S. Grant as detective. His first appearance was in *Blue Murder*, Issue 12. There are more Grant short stories slated for 2002, including one featuring the viewpoint of his horse, Cincinnati, in *Presidential Pet Detectives*, edited by Carole Nelson Douglas.

For more information on Bouchercon and the awards, check the web at:

www.bouchercon2001.com/2001_awards.html

BOOK MARKS
A Jeffrey Marks Newsletter
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Ulysses Grant contest

Win Books! Win Booze!

To celebrate the Anthony nomination of *Magnolias and Mayhem* for best anthology, I'm hosting a contest. You'll get a signed copy of *Magnolias and Mayhem*, so you can read and vote for it for best anthology. The collection contains a Grant short story. You'll also receive a signed copy of *The Ambush of My Name*.

Up for grabs are a copy of Magnolias and Mayhem, a copy of The Ambush of My Name, a promotional mug for M&M, and an airline bottle of Jack Daniels whiskey.

Just to throw a little bit of Grant realism into the contest, I'm giving away a bottle of whiskey and a mug to drink it in.

All you have to do is go to my website, www.jeffreymarks.com and register for my e-newsletter on the home page by Friday, October 5th. By doing that, you're automatically registered for the drawing, the books, and the booze. What more could you want?

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