

Meeting Grant's Great-Great-Grandson

by **Chris Mackowski**

Posted on September 1, 2015

Last month, while giving a talk for the **Friends of Wilderness Battlefield** on *Grant's Last Battle*, I had the chance to meet one of Ulysses S. Grant's descendants: great-great grandson John Griffiths.

John and his two sisters are the children of Julia Grant Griffiths. Julia (named after her maternal great-grandmother) was the daughter of Ulysses S. Grant III, the eldest son of Frederick Dent Grant, Ulysses S. Grant's eldest son. Or, laid out a little more directly:

Ulysses S. Grant → Fred Grant → Ulysses S. Grant III → Julia Grant Griffiths → John Griffiths

Griffiths recalled a photo of the family seated on the front porch of Grant Cottage in upstate New York, taken during



Me and Grant's descendant, John Griffiths

Grant's last days. "There are two children seated in the front of that photo," Griffiths told me. "One of them, a little boy dressed like Little Lord Fauntleroy, I knew very well. That was my grandfather."

The other child was Griffiths's great-aunt, Julia Dent Grant, who later went on to marry into Russian nobility. As Princess Cantacuzène, she wrote a detailed account of her grandfather's last days as part of her memoir, *My Life Here and There*.

"My grandfather always wore a slight frown in those days, which grandmama would smooth out in passing with her tiny, beautiful hand," Julia wrote of those last months. "He always gave her a smile then, and the cloud of trouble for the moment was raised."



Young Julia's brother, Ulysses III—John Griffiths' grandfather—was three at the time the photo was taken. In 1949, Ulysses III returned to Grant Cottage as an adult to revisit the scene of his grandfather's last days.

Griffiths, as a child, visited the cottage shortly thereafter. "I have only been to Grant's Cottage once and it was back in the early 1950s," he told me. "So, I don't remember any thing about it, except that I think that my mother, two sisters, and I had our photo taken on the front steps."

Talking with John, I'm struck by something his great-aunt wrote about their famous ancestor. "Only the eyes glowed or grew deep with humor and intensity . . ." she recalled, saying they "reflected sentiments and responded instantly with sympathetic light to what was going on round him."

John, beneath the wide brim of his tall sun hat and nearly buried under his own beard, had those same sorts of eyes: alive, expressive, intense.

I often meet the descendants of soldiers who fought in the war, but not often do I meet the descendants of specific people I've written about. **I've had a descendant of Stonewall Jackson hear me tell the tale of his last days**, and now I've had a descendant of Grant hear me tell the tale of his last days. These are meaningful connections to me, linking my work back to the very real people who lived those poignant stories that I love to share so much.

Grant (and Jackson) should not exist to us today as the marble men history sometimes remembers them as: they were fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers.

And their family stories are still very much alive.

* * *

Griffiths, who now lives near Fredericksburg, Virginia, was **profiled by the local newspaper, the Free Lance-Star, back in 2009.**

Posted in **Books & Authors, Emerging Civil War Series, Leadership--Federal, Memory**

Tagged as **Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Grant Cottage, Grant's Last Battle, John Griffiths, Ulysses S. Grant, Ulysses S. Grant III, wilderness**

29 Responses to *Meeting Grant's Great-Great-Grandson*



Gene says:

September 1, 2015 at 6:38 PM

Courtland Preston Creech Freeman is GG Granddaughter of Stonewall. You met her 16 March 2013 at NC Civil War RT. I've sent you a photo

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Chris Mackowski says:

September 1, 2015 at 7:55 PM

Thanks, Gene! I linked back to a story I wrote about that meeting. That was such a delightful evening and a real highlight of my Civil War career—not only because I met Courty and her husband but because of the warm hospitality you and the NCCWRT showed me. What a great bunch of folks!

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Melissa Grant says:

August 28, 2023 at 8:44 PM

I'm also a descendant of president Grant! My great-grandfather is Ulysses Simpson Grant III

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DiAnn (Richardson) Laney says:

September 24, 2023 at 8:07 PM

I have always been told that my Grandfather's Grandmother was the neice of USG. Her name was Elizabeth Grant .(2/4/1843 -10/28/1924) I think she was born in Missouri. She is buried in McCloud , OK. She married Alexander Richardson . My Grandfathers name

was Grant Richardson .They married in Crawford County, MO. I am taking a class on Presidents and First Ladies at Wichita State University and it has made me more curious to find out for sure if she was the neice of USG. The instructor is quiet fond of USG. He believes he is among the top presidents and would have even been better if our country had been more stable and if alcohol had not been a problem.

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ncatty says:

September 4, 2015 at 4:50 PM

Remarkable. Same size, same posture.

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Thomas R Place says:

May 9, 2017 at 2:31 PM

IS NOT HISTORY WONDERFUL

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Morgan says:

September 16, 2017 at 6:34 PM

He is my aunt's very close friend we all reenact together

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Janet Chase says:

February 3, 2018 at 4:57 PM

Thank you so much for your feature of Grant's g-g-grandson. I often wonder about descendants of the people I read so much about – where they are now, do they have any Civil War memorabilia, or recollections that have been passed down through the generations. I think this would be a wonderful topic for a future blog.

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Irene says:

July 25, 2020 at 1:01 PM

Is this true [https://famouskin.com/famous-kin-chart.php?](https://famouskin.com/famous-kin-chart.php?name=8442+ulysses+s+grant&kin=8952+franklin+d+roosevelt&via=9307+jonathan+delano)

[name=8442+ulysses+s+grant&kin=8952+franklin+d+roosevelt&via=9307+jonathan+delano](https://famouskin.com/famous-kin-chart.php?name=8442+ulysses+s+grant&kin=8952+franklin+d+roosevelt&via=9307+jonathan+delano)

... Ulysses S. Grant was the 4th cousin 1 time removed to FDR?

Thank you

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Lindsay says:

December 15, 2020 at 7:05 PM

My grandmother just passed Monday and she was a direct descendant.

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Pingback: [Year in Review 2020: #6 | Emerging Civil War](#)



Travis Neater says:

January 31, 2021 at 11:19 AM

I am told by my father William Neater his mom's mom was a Grant and her uncle was US Grant. ? No sure how validate this clam?

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Taylor says:

February 20, 2021 at 12:18 AM

Ancestry.com and similar resources, for a start?

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Henry Fleming says:

April 9, 2021 at 10:55 AM

Left arm akimbo, I assume it was a natural stance, wonder if that's a "Grant" thing.

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Brianna Grant says:

May 26, 2021 at 1:07 AM

It's a grant thing, everyone on my fathers side has the same sort of stance as they all did.

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Brandy Law says:

April 29, 2023 at 8:32 PM

My grandfather was Calvin B. Grant and his wife Shirley Ann Grant use to always tell us we were part of the Ulysses S. Grant family. I tried to do a family tree but was new to it and had no clue to what I was doing lol. But all the Grant men have the same look! Same hair line , same facial features and the blue eyes as well and some of of lady's lol. You can tell a Grant is a Grant.

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Brandy Grant Law says:

April 29, 2023 at 8:45 PM

My Grant father Calvin B. Grant grand mother Shirley Ann Grant their kids Mary, Loretta, Calvin Jr, Billy Ray, Barbara and my father some call Bones (Jeff) Jeffery Lynn Grant my mother is Tina Louise Grant my name Is Brandy Grant Law and I have 3 sisters Shavonds, Theresa and Bethany. We called my grandfather mother Mammie Grant Biggs.

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Randall Cooke says:

July 9, 2021 at 2:05 AM

My 3 siblings and I, are a diluted relation through his niece "Lucy Grant"

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Amani Scott says:

July 28, 2021 at 8:26 PM

I am a descendant of Ulysses S. Grant as well. I believe he's my deceased great grandmothers cousin. So interesting to see!

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Amani Scott says:

July 28, 2021 at 8:27 PM

He meaning this man mentioned in the article!!

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John Pryor says:

September 6, 2021 at 10:19 AM

One of Grant's descendants worked in Glastonbury CT years ago at what was our town's best camera shop. It and he have unfortunately moved on.

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Pingback: **Happy 200th Birthday, Ulysses S. Grant! | Emerging Civil War**



Steven C Vowell says:

August 5, 2022 at 6:41 PM

I believe that my son has a peace of furniture that Ulysses Grant had hand made for his for a wedding present. Nice peace. Would love to Sale it.

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Pingback: **Emerging Civil War**



Debbi says:

January 28, 2023 at 10:07 PM

I loved reading your article. I have found out recently from one of my aunts that we are descendants of Ulysses S, Grant and Julia Denton. My aunt told me that Ulysses S Grant is my several greats grandfather. Would you be open to helping me find out more? Sincerely, Deborah Walker Fisher.

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Pace b says:

July 28, 2023 at 11:42 PM

After the death of my grand father we started diving in his family tree to his grandfather Virginus Despaux Groner who was said to be a friend of Grants after the war but the family story's about virginus being in texas where he and grant would have met each other and why grant was told not to be at the Ford's theater because the Knights of the golden circle planed to assassinating Lincoln all makes since to me now my grandfather had committed that they had killed Lincoln meaning the knights of the golden circle and putting grant in line for the president .Virginus Groner was a high ranking member in the K.G.C. and related to Robert E.Lee thru his mothers side of the family .Virginus Despaux Groner was related to James baker pace the

banker of Richmond and also had a hand in the missing gold from Virginia and sent the telegram to fire on Fort Sumter I believe there were many people other than Virginia playing both sides but because I know the truth thru family ties it will die with me but grant wasn't at Ford's because he was tipped off not to go John Wilkes Booth was also a member of the K.G.C. who didn't act alone but was put up to it by the K.G.C. I can put both men in Texas and friends after the war and both men in politics the civil war was fought over political reasons and I find so many connections of virginus groners actions right in the historical information but over looked completely to piece these people together in the death of Lincoln.

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Reply



HistoryPlebe says:

October 3, 2023 at 7:31 PM

I have no wherewithal to speak as to Virginius Despaux Groner or your theory, but the timing and location of your theory would not be simultaneously possible. Grant met with Lincoln and his cabinet in Washington 5 days after taking the surrender from Lee in Appomattox, hours before Lincoln was shot. There is no way Grant could have made it to Texas and back to Washington in that amount of time.

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HistoryPlebe says:

October 3, 2023 at 7:29 PM

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HistoryPlebe says:

October 3, 2023 at 7:34 PM

[Please delete the above comment; it is misplaced and has been duplicated in the proper location.]

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