



BIVOUAC

KENT CIVIL WAR SOCIETY * P.O. BOX 3671 KENT, OH 44240

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**“ULYSSES S. GRANT – FORGED IN WAR, INDISPENSABLE IN PEACE”
A TALK BY CHRIS BURNS
SHELTER HOUSE, FRED FULLER PARK, KENT
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026, AT 7:30 P.M.**

Our speaker for March will be Chris Burns, who will talk about Ulysses S. Grant, one of our Ohio sons. The attributes Grant learned as a general were critically important in preparing him for the presidency. During the war, he learned leadership, dealing with adversaries and politicians, and finally building a team he could trust. The adversity he faced on the battlefield provided the experience he would need to lead this country to a new birth of freedom in the turbulent aftermath of the Civil War.

Chris Burns is a Civil War historian and lifelong Ohio resident. Burns has conducted significant research regarding Ulysses S. Grant and President Lincoln, as well as the Siege of Cincinnati. He was interviewed by WKET TV in Kentucky for a three-part series on Grant. Burns has presented to historical and community groups and events throughout the Midwest. He is a former adjunct history faculty-member at Northern Kentucky University. His passion is linking the past to the present and bringing history to life.

Our optional pre-meeting dinner will be at Eddy’s Deli & Restaurant, 4581 Kent Road in Stow, beginning at 5:30 p.m.



Grant

Ulysses S. Grant (born Hiram Ulysses Grant; April 27, 1822 – July 23, 1885) was the 18th president of the United States, serving from 1869 to 1877. He previously led the Union Army to victory in the American Civil War in 1865 as commanding general.

Grant attended a service for Civil War veterans in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, on August 4, 1884, receiving a standing ovation from the ten thousand attendees; it would be his last public appearance. In the summer of 1884, Grant complained of a sore throat but put off seeing a doctor until late October, when he learned it was cancer, possibly caused by his frequent cigar smoking. Grant chose not to reveal the seriousness of his condition to his wife, who soon found out from Grant's doctor. In March 1885, The New York Times announced that Grant was dying of cancer, causing nationwide public concern. Knowing of Grant and Julia's financial difficulties, Congress restored him to the rank of General of the Army with full retirement pay—Grant's assumption of the presidency required that he resign his commission and forfeit his (and his widow's) pension.

Grant was nearly penniless and worried about leaving his wife money to live on. He approached The Century Magazine and wrote a number of articles on his Civil War campaigns for \$500 (equivalent to \$18,000 in 2025) each. The articles were well received by critics, and the editor, Robert Underwood Johnson, suggested that Grant write a memoir, as Sherman and others had done. The magazine offered him a book contract with a 10% royalty. However, Grant's friend Mark Twain, one of the few who understood Grant's precarious financial condition, offered him an unheard-of 70% royalty. To provide for his family, Grant worked intensely on his memoirs in New York City. His former staff member Adam Badeau assisted with the research, while his son Frederick located documents and did much of the factchecking. Because of the summer heat and humidity, his doctors recommended that he move upstate to a cottage at the top of Mount McGregor, offered by a family friend.

On July 18, 1885, Grant finished his memoir, which includes the events of his life to the end of the Civil War. The Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant was a critical and commercial success. Julia Grant eventually received about \$450,000 in royalties (equivalent to \$16,100,000 in 2025). The memoir has been highly regarded by the public, military historians, and literary critics. Grant portrayed himself as an honorable Western hero, whose strength lies in his honesty. He candidly depicted his battles against both the Confederates and internal army foes.



Grant working on his memoirs, less than a month before his death