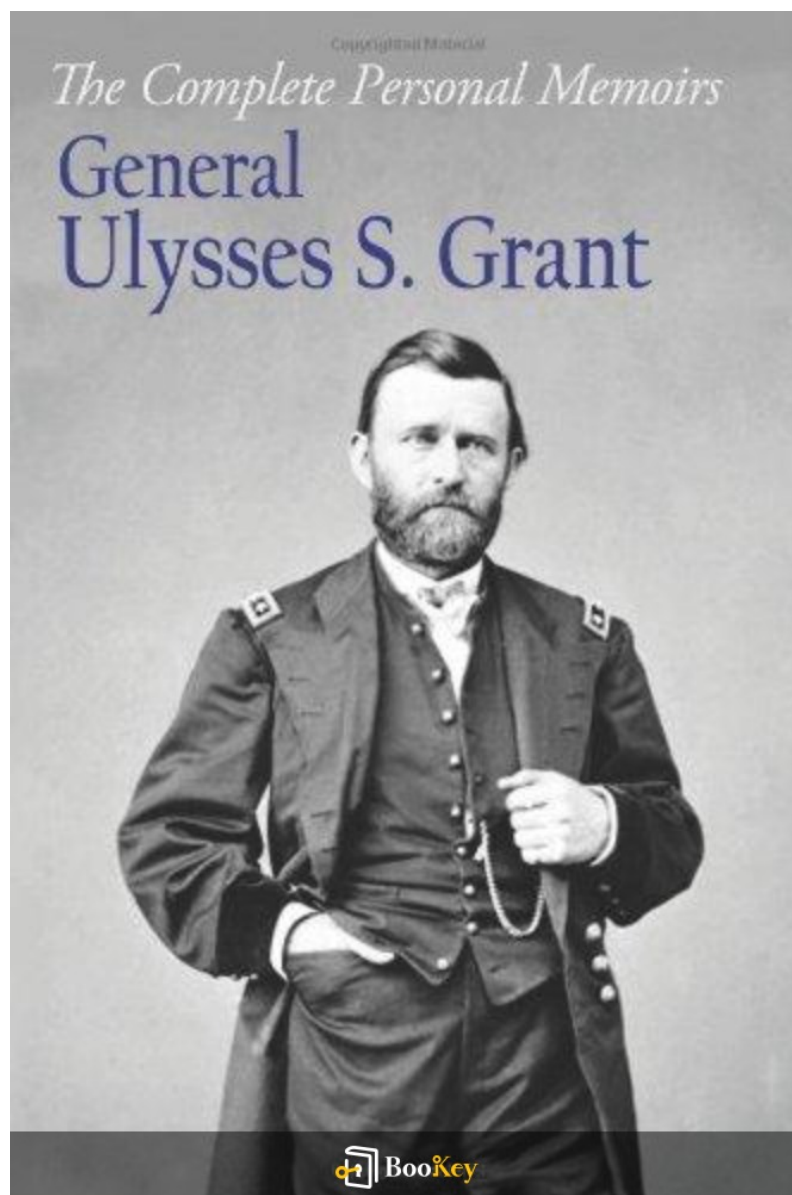


# The Complete Personal Memoirs Of General U.s. Grant PDF

Ulysses S. Grant



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# About the book

Summary of "The Complete Personal Memoirs of General U.S. Grant"

In his memoirs, General Ulysses S. Grant provides readers with an engaging and personal look at his life, focusing on his experiences as a military leader during the Civil War and as president of the United States. The memoir is characterized by its detail and clarity, offering insights into Grant's military strategies and personal reflections forged in the challenges of warfare and leadership. More than a simple narrative of conflicts and politics, Grant's work presents a profound exploration of themes such as resilience, leadership, and the quest for unity and justice. Throughout the pages, readers can witness the unwavering determination of a man who faced numerous obstacles yet remained committed to his vision. This memoir not only captures significant historical moments but also imparts enduring lessons on character and perseverance, inviting readers to reflect on how these experiences have left an indelible mark on the fabric of the nation.

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# About the author

Profile: Ulysses S. Grant

Name: Ulysses S. Grant

Position: 18th President of the United States

Notable Role: Commanding General of the Union Army during the American Civil War

Key Work: "The Complete Personal Memoirs of General U.S. Grant"

Birth Date: April 27, 1822

Birthplace: Point Pleasant, Ohio

Background:

Ulysses S. Grant's life story is a compelling narrative of resilience and triumph. From humble beginnings in the Midwest, he ascended to become a pivotal figure in American history, both militarily and politically. A graduate of West Point, Grant's early military career was a mix of challenges and victories, with his battle against alcoholism being one of his personal hurdles.

Military Legacy:

Grant's strategic brilliance came to the forefront during significant battles of the Civil War, including the Siege of Vicksburg and the surrender at

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Appomattox, where his tactical innovations proved crucial for the Union's victory. These achievements cemented his status as one of the leading military figures in the country.

#### Memoirs:

In the later years of his life, Grant penned his memoirs, offering profound insights into not just his military endeavors but also his personal values and experiences during a period of national upheaval. Completed shortly before his passing in 1885, these memoirs serve as a valuable historical document reflecting on a nation undergoing significant change.

#### Legacy:

Ulysses S. Grant's remarkable journey is a testament to determination and strategic insight, solidifying his legacy as both a military leader and a President who navigated the complexities of a transforming nation.

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# **The Complete Personal Memoirs Of General U.s. Grant Summary**

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# The Complete Personal Memoirs Of General U.s. Grant Summary Chapter List

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# 1. Chapter 1: Early Life and Formative Experiences of Ulysses S. Grant

Ulysses S. Grant, born on April 27, 1822, in Point Pleasant, Ohio, was the first of six children in the Grant family, positioned within the modest middle class of the early 19th century. His father, Jesse Root Grant, was a tanner and a businessman, deeply dedicated to his work ethos, while his mother, Hannah Simpson Grant, was a more reserved influence, valued for her nurturing spirit. These early familial dynamics and socio-economic conditions played a significant role in shaping the character of young Grant.

Growing up, Grant exhibited an affinity for horses, which would prove influential in his military career. At age 10, he was given a small pony, and this companionship sparked a lifelong bond with equine creatures. Not only did it foster a sense of responsibility and independence in him, but it also played a crucial role in developing his confidence and courage as he later took charge of sophisticated cavalry operations during the Civil War.

Grant's formal education was uneven; he attended common schools in Ohio and was particularly proficient in mathematics. His intellectual struggles did not stem from a lack of intelligence but rather from a level of disinterest in traditional academic pursuits, preferring instead subjects that engaged him pragmatically, such as arithmetic and geometry. His practical mindset allowed him to understand logistics and supply—key elements he would



later utilize in military strategy.

In 1839, at the age of 17, Grant made a life-altering decision to enter the United States Military Academy at West Point. His admission, a result of his father's political connections, was not without difficulty. Grant faced rigorous academic challenges, and his record as a cadet was marked by inconsistency and often mediocre performance. He graduated in 1843, ranked 21st in a class of 39, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry.

Soon after, Grant embarked on a military career that began with the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). His time in this conflict served as a crucial formative experience, where he witnessed the complexities of leadership in the field. Grant participated in several key battles, including the Battle of Monterrey and the Siege of Veracruz, where he observed the significance of strategy and the harsh realities of war. His engagement in these military operations not only honed his skills as a soldier but also provided him with insights into the responsibilities and moral complexities of commanding troops under dire circumstances.

Post-war, Grant's life was characterized by various postings across the country, including stints in the Pacific Northwest and in the southern states after the war. His experiences traveling and living in diverse environments

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contributed to his growing sense of purpose and duty. However, like many others, he faced periods of uncertainty and strife during peacetime, experiencing struggles with alcohol and personal challenges that would eventually plague him throughout his life. The cyclical nature of his career and challenges informed his resilience, building a character that would be tested time and again during the trials of the Civil War.

Throughout these formative years, Grant cultivated relationships that would later bolster his military career. His friendship with men like William Tecumseh Sherman, who would become one of his most trusted generals, illustrated the importance of camaraderie and trust in leadership. Their mutual support and understanding of each other's strengths played a significant role in developing not only military strategies but also a broader vision for restoring the Union.

In summary, Grant's early life and formative experiences established a foundation of determination, practical thinking, and leadership, all crucial elements that he would draw upon as he navigated the complexities of the Civil War and the subsequent challenges that followed. His background, shaped by familial ties, educational challenges, military experiences, and personal trials, forged a leader who would ultimately navigate the nation through its most turbulent period.

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## 2. Chapter 2: The Civil War Years: Leadership in Battle and Strategy

The Civil War was a defining period in the life of Ulysses S. Grant, during which he emerged as one of the most significant military leaders in American history. Grant's leadership and strategic approach to warfare were marked by a combination of persistence, adaptability, and a keen understanding of the dynamics of battle. His military career began to truly shape during the early months of the war when he commanded Union forces in the West, where he achieved several key victories that set the tone for his approach to combat.

One of Grant's notable early successes was the capture of Fort Donelson in February 1862. This victory not only bolstered Northern morale but also opened the Tennessee River as a strategically significant avenue for advancing deeper into the Confederate territories. Grant's insistence on unconditional surrender, which earned him the nickname "Unconditional Surrender Grant," was indicative of his determination to accept nothing less than total defeat of the enemy. This approach would come to exemplify his attitude throughout the war—he believed the only way to win the war was to apply relentless pressure on Confederate forces and degrade their ability to fight back.

Following Fort Donelson, Grant achieved even greater success at the Battle



of Shiloh in April 1862. Though the battle resulted in heavy casualties on both sides, Grant's ability to regroup and reinforce his troops allowed the Union to secure a crucial victory. Understanding the importance of maintaining supply lines and troop morale, he emphasized the need for strong logistical support. Grant's willingness to adapt his strategies in the face of changing circumstances was a hallmark of his leadership, one that he would put to the test again and again as the war progressed.

One of Grant's most significant contributions came during the Vicksburg Campaign, which exemplified his strategic prowess. The city of Vicksburg was a critical Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River, and its capture would effectively split the Confederacy in two. Grant implemented a series of maneuvers designed to deceive and outflank Confederate defenses. By using a combination of direct assaults, sieges, and stunning logistical maneuvers—such as moving troops down the river in a daring attempt to evade enemy fortifications—Grant successfully besieged Vicksburg, culminating in its surrender on July 4, 1863. This victory not only solidified Grant's reputation as a military leader but also significantly altered the course of the war, giving the Union full control of the Mississippi River and severely crippling Confederate supply lines.

In the eastern theaters of war, Grant faced formidable opponents like General Robert E. Lee. Leading the Army of the Potomac, Grant engaged in

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a series of brutal confrontations aimed at dismantling Lee's forces. The Overland Campaign, particularly the battles of Wilderness and Spotsylvania, showcased Grant's willingness to bear heavy losses in exchange for strategic gains. Unlike his predecessors, who often retreated after suffering defeats, Grant took a more aggressive stance, seeing each engagement as an opportunity to wear down Confederate forces. His approach was summed up in his belief that "many times the most horrid slaughter had to be done in tactful and successful ways, but we had to keep the pressure on."

Grant's innovative use of combined arms was another hallmark of his strategy during the Civil War. He understood that successful infantry movements required the coordinated support of artillery and cavalry. At the Battle of Cold Harbor, although Grant faced criticism for his frontal assaults, he learned valuable lessons that influenced his future operations. Recognizing the importance of intelligence and reconnaissance, Grant emphasized preparation and advanced planning in every subsequent engagement.

Ultimately, Grant's leadership style was characterized by his ability to rally support from his commanders and instill a sense of purpose within his ranks. His famous phrase, "I will fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," illustrated his unyielding resolve to maintain focus on objectives despite significant obstacles.



Grant's effectiveness as a leader during the Civil War hinged not only on his battlefield successes but also on his broader strategic vision that sought to undermine the ability of the Confederate states to wage war. His focus on total warfare, where the Union sought to destroy both Confederate military assets and resources, was pivotal to the resolution of the conflict. By the time he was appointed General-in-Chief of all Union armies in 1864, Grant had already proven his mettle, framing the Civil War as not simply a series of battles but as a total conflict requiring comprehensive solutions.

In summary, Chapter 2 highlights Grant's evolution as a leader and strategist during the Civil War period. His ability to adapt to the changing nature of warfare, his insistence on aggressive engagement, and his focus on logistical and strategic superiority played critical roles in the Union's eventual victory. His experiences and lessons from this era would later influence his presidency and his views on leadership, governance, and conflict resolution.

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### 3. Chapter 3: The Presidency: Achievements and Challenges of the Office

Ulysses S. Grant's presidency, which spanned from 1869 to 1877, marked a pivotal period in American history. As the 18th President of the United States, Grant brought to the office a unique perspective shaped by his experiences during the Civil War. While his tenure was characterized by significant achievements, it was also marred by challenges that tested his leadership and commitment to the nation.

One of Grant's primary achievements during his presidency was the push for Reconstruction, particularly aimed at securing civil rights for freed African Americans in the South. Grant recognized the importance of integrating the formerly enslaved population into the fabric of American society and was a staunch advocate for the enforcement of the Reconstruction Acts. Under his administration, the 15th Amendment was ratified in 1870, which granted African American men the right to vote. This momentous change was a testament to Grant's commitment to civil rights and the advancement of equality in post-war America. However, this ambitious agenda met with fierce resistance from Southern whites, leading to the rise of groups like the Ku Klux Klan, which actively sought to undermine these advancements through violence and intimidation.

In response to the growing violence and unrest against African Americans





and their allies, Grant took decisive action. He deployed federal troops to the South to suppress the Klan's influence and protect the rights of African Americans. Grant's administration also passed the Enforcement Acts, which aimed to curb Klan violence by making such acts of intimidation a federal crime. This commitment to civil rights demonstrated Grant's belief in a unified nation where all individuals, regardless of race, could enjoy the same freedoms.

Grant's presidency was also marked by significant economic challenges, particularly the Panic of 1873, a financial crisis that triggered a severe economic depression lasting several years. This economic turmoil resulted in widespread unemployment and discontent, leading to political challenges for the Grant administration. Although he initially struggled to address the crisis effectively, Grant maintained his belief in the importance of stewardship for the nation's economy. He emphasized the need for fiscal responsibility and moved to stabilize the economy, though criticisms arose regarding his handling of the situation.

Another major feature of Grant's presidency was his commitment to the expansion of railroads, which were essential for economic growth and national integration. His administration supported several measures to promote rail development, including the Pacific Railroad Act, which facilitated the construction of the transcontinental railroad. This monumental



project revolutionized transportation, linked the continent, and spurred economic growth. Furthermore, it provided strategic military advantages and helped establish the United States as a rapidly advancing nation in the industrial era.

However, Grant's presidency was not without its controversies. His administration faced extensive corruption scandals, notably the infamous Credit Mobilier scandal, where high-level government officials, including members of Congress, were implicated in a scheme to defraud the government through fraudulent contracts with the Union Pacific Railroad. Such scandals tarnished Grant's reputation and led to widespread public disillusionment with the government. Despite Grant's personal integrity and honest intentions, these incidents raised questions about the lax oversight and accountability within his administration.

In addressing foreign policy, Grant endeavored to enhance America's standing on the global stage. His administration worked towards expanding trade and strengthening diplomatic relations, particularly in Latin America and Asia. One notable achievement was the negotiation of the Treaty of Washington in 1871, which resolved longstanding disputes with Great Britain regarding the damage inflicted during the Civil War by British-built Confederate raiders. Grant's diplomatic efforts were instrumental in bolstering American interests abroad, though his foreign policies also faced



criticism for being overly assertive.

In conclusion, Ulysses S. Grant's presidency was a complex interplay of significant achievements and considerable challenges. His dedication to civil rights, economic stability, and international diplomacy showcases a leader fully immersed in the trials of a nation recovering from civil strife. However, the specter of corruption and economic difficulties served as profound challenges that would shape the legacy of his presidency. Through perseverance and a steadfast commitment to his principles, Grant navigated these tumultuous waters, leaving behind a dual legacy of progress and caution for future leaders.

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## 4. Chapter 4: Reflections on War, Peace, and Personal Philosophy

In the concluding chapters of his memoirs, General Ulysses S. Grant delves into profound reflections on the nature of war, peace, and his personal philosophy, shaped by his extensive experiences throughout the Civil War and his time as President of the United States. Grant's thoughts reveal a deep understanding of the human condition and the complexities surrounding conflict and resolution.

From the outset, Grant contemplates the brutal realities of war. He acknowledges the immense suffering and sacrifice that accompany armed conflict, illustrating the toll it takes not only on soldiers but also on families and entire communities. His reflections are imbued with a sense of somber realism, recognizing that war, while sometimes necessary, often leads to irreparable loss. In numerous passages, he recounts the heartbreak he witnessed: the soldiers who fell on the battlefield, the mourning families, and the long-lasting scars left on those who survived.

One of Grant's pivotal observations is that, despite the horrors of war, there exists a paradoxical relationship between conflict and peace. He asserts that often, the pathway to lasting peace is paved through the painful rites of war. This notion reflects a broader philosophical stance on the inevitable cycles of human history, where conflict can lead to renewal and the establishment



of a stronger societal order. He draws from historical precedents, suggesting that the end of the Civil War, although devastating, ultimately set the stage for profound societal changes, including the abolition of slavery and the push for civil rights.

Grant's authentic reflections extend to the responsibilities of leadership during times of war. He grapples with the immense burden placed upon those in power and the difficult decisions they must make. His memoirs reveal a leader who does not shy away from admitting the weight of moral dilemmas faced during the war. For instance, the tough calls made during battles, including the decision to engage in large-scale confrontations that led to staggering casualties, underline a leader torn between strategic necessity and humanitarian consideration.

In discussing peace, Grant emphasizes its fragility and the constant vigilance required to maintain it. He reflects on the post-war period, advocating for healing and reconciliation rather than retribution. Grant's approach to peace is practical and grounded; he understood that the scars of war would not mend overnight and that the nation's recovery required both patience and collaborative spirit among its divided populace. His commitment to reuniting a fractured nation shows his belief in the power of diplomacy and dialogue over further conflict.

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Moreover, Grant presents a strong belief in the fundamental goodness of humanity. Despite the horrors he had witnessed, he remained optimistic about people's ability to work together for common goals. He cherished values like mutual respect, charity, and understanding, believing that these principles are essential in fostering peace and alleviating the cycles of violence. His philosophy leads him to advocate for a society that prioritizes education and moral development as foundations for sustainable peace.

Through the personal philosophy that emerges in his writing, Grant reveals a profound sense of duty and service over personal ambition. He frames his life not simply in terms of victories but also in terms of the responsibilities that his position entails. Grant's humility is apparent as he places the needs of the country and its citizens above his own personal accolades. This selflessness is a vital takeaway from his memoirs, as it illustrates the necessity for leaders to prioritize their constituents' welfare.

Overall, Grant's reflections in this chapter offer a nuanced understanding of war and its implications. By articulating the delicate balance between conflict and peace, he invites readers to ponder the broader consequences of their actions. His philosophy underscores the ongoing struggle for justice and harmony in society, reminding us that the road to peace is often littered with the lessons learned from the past. Grant's memoirs serve not just as a record of his experiences but as a call to action for future generations to



strive for a peaceful and just world, informed by the lessons of history and the importance of compassion in leadership.

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## 5. Chapter 5: Last Days: Legacy and Lessons from a Life of Service

Ulysses S. Grant's final days were marked by reflection and a resolute understanding of his legacy. Following his two terms as President of the United States, Grant faced numerous challenges in his personal life, particularly in relation to his finances. By the end of 1884, the former General found himself nearly bankrupt, a stark contrast to the respect and accolades he had amassed throughout his military career and presidency. However, rather than succumbing to despair, Grant approached his economic hardships with the same determination that characterized his approach to battle.

In 1885, Grant began writing his memoirs as a way to secure financial stability for his family after his passing. This decision also stemmed from his desire to document the truth of his experiences, particularly his role in the Civil War. He meticulously recounted key battles, strategic decisions, and his experiences with notable figures from the war, including his interactions with Abraham Lincoln. Grant's memoirs were not just a financial endeavor; they emerged as a crucial historical document that illuminated the complexities of war leadership and presidency from his perspective.

The release of "The Complete Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant" in



1885 became an immediate success, not only helping to alleviate his financial woes but also solidifying his place in American history. Grant's candid and poignant reflections offered readers insights into his character, leadership, and the burdens of command during one of the nation's most tumultuous periods. Through his writing, he endeavored to uphold the principles of honesty and integrity, ensuring that history would remember him favorably despite the controversies of his presidency, which were often overshadowed by issues of corruption within his administration.

In these final years, Grant's legacy began to take shape beyond the battlefield. He became a symbol of reconciliation and unity following the Civil War. His policies, particularly his dedication to civil rights for African Americans during Reconstruction, showcased his commitment to equality and justice. However, he also faced criticism from various factions who believed his efforts did not go far enough. Grant's ability to navigate these complexities speaks volumes about his character and leadership.

In addition to his memoirs, Grant's final days were marked by a sense of vulnerability as he battled throat cancer, which ultimately claimed his life in July 1885. Even in illness, he maintained his dignified demeanor and continued to reflect on the importance of service to one's country. He expressed hopes that his experiences and writings would inspire future generations to understand the sacrifices made by those who served in the



armed forces, as well as the profound nature of leadership in times of crisis.

One of the critical lessons from Grant's life is the value of resilience; he faced significant obstacles throughout his career, yet he always managed to rise to the occasion. His military strategies in battle, which often involved risking it all on audacious plans, are paralleled by his willingness to take personal risks in writing his memoirs, aiming to set the record straight about his life and service.

Grant's legacy continues to be debated and reevaluated by historians and the general public alike. As he transitioned from a soldier to a politician to an author, each role added layers to his legacy. His emphasis on humility, service, and the unyielding pursuit of truth remains relevant, teaching valuable lessons about perseverance and accountability in leadership roles.

In conclusion, the last days of Ulysses S. Grant represent a profound chapter not only in his own life but in American history. His legacy as a military leader, president, and ultimately as a memoirist highlights a life dedicated to service. The lessons he imparted through his experiences emphasize the significance of integrity and the importance of standing steadfast in the face of adversity. Grant's journey reminds us that true leadership involves both triumphs and struggles, and it is through those experiences that lasting legacies are forged.

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