

# Grant Administration 1868-1876

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Early Life and War Record



Originally named Hiram Ulysses Grant, an error at West Point Military Academy in 1839 accidentally renamed him Ulysses S. Grant. He kept the

name. He served in the Mexican War and rose to the rank of captain. During peacetime, he drank excessively and was forced to resign from the army in 1854. After failing at several jobs, he reenlisted in the army at the outbreak of civil war.

Grant became the first hero of the North when he forced the surrender of Confederate forts Donelson and Henry. After a long siege in 1863, Grant's leadership lead to the downfall of Vicksburg, thus allowing Union access to the vital Mississippi River. In 1864, President Lincoln promoted Grant to command all Federal armies. Without delay, Grant pursued and forced Confederate general Robert E. Lee to surrender at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. The Civil War essentially came to an end.

1. The Civil War made Grant (infer—circle one)

- e. a vicious killer
- h. a national hero
- s. an alcoholic
- y. a bitter person

## Republican Policy

Grant, once a Democrat but now a Republican, easily won the presidency in 1868. Many had great hopes that Grant's ability to lead in war would translate to great leadership in peace. From the beginning, Grant decided to allow

Congress to run the country while he would carry out their orders. Unfortunately, Congress had no policy and needed leadership itself.

Without a party platform that stated what the Republicans wanted to do, the Republican Party appeared weak which only encouraged Southerners to replace their Republican state governments with Democratic ones. Soon, African Americans saw themselves out of public offices and their newly won rights slowly disappear as the South returned to something like it was before the war.

2. Grant's policy as president was to (circle one)

- e. rebuild the military
- h. make national policy
- s. let Congress run the country
- y. control the Republican Party

3. The Republican Party began to fall apart because (circle one)

- e. they had no party platform
- h. they began to support the South
- s. the economy collapsed
- y. many did not like Grant

## Southern Discontent

President Grant realized he needed to take action and reluctantly became the leader of the Republican Party. In 1871, he asked Congress to pass anti-Klan legislation.

At the beginning of Reconstruction, African Americans started to gain political and economic rights they never had. African Americans owned land, held political offices, went to school, and

could vote. However, the white racist South reacted violently toward the idea that African Americans could become equal to whites. Several organizations formed for the purpose of keeping the African American populations in poverty and out of power.

In 1867, former Confederate officers formed the Ku Klux Klan. Their leader, Nathan Bedford Forrest, sought to use intimidation, violence, and even murder to keep African Americans and white Republicans away from the polls. This resulted in the Democrats coming back into power in many Southern states. Terrorism reined in many parts of the South for years. With some of the worst violence anywhere, Governor Robert K. Scott of South Carolina asked the federal government for help.

On April 20, 1871, President Grant signed the Ku Klux Klan Bill. In October, the army and federal marshals arrested over 600 suspects and put them in jail. Over time, many began to confess and give up important leaders. Trials began in November and lasted through December. Most convicted members received no more than six months in jail. The Klan ceased to exist until its resurrection after World War I fifty years later.

4. The Ku Klux Klan was (circle three)

- e. a terrorist organization
- h. a racist group
- s. run by former Union officers
- y. opposed to the Republican Party

5. What state had the worst Klan violence? (circle one)

- e. North Carolina
- h. South Carolina
- s. Virginia
- y. Louisiana

### Reform

Grant hoped to change patronage that determined the way people received government jobs in the federal government. Since at least the Jackson Administration forty years earlier, politicians replaced federal workers with their own family members, friends, and loyal party members. Many of these appointed people knew nothing about how to do their jobs and often they stole money or took bribes. Grant asked Congress to change this policy in 1870.

In the next year, Congress passed a civil service bill to create a committee to see to it that only qualified people got government jobs. However, many in Congress disliked the reforms. Congressmen enjoyed giving away jobs in exchange for votes, favors, bribes, and gifts. After three years, Congress let the committee die and declined to renew it despite several requests from President Grant to keep it going.

6. What was wrong with patronage? (circle three)

- e. often workers did not know how to do their jobs
- h. people often stole money
- s. patronage started in the Lincoln Administration
- y. Congress gave away jobs for bribes

### Scandals

During the Grant Administration, a number of scandals involving federal workers severely hurt Grant's reputation. In 1869, speculators Jay Gould and Jim Fisk

started buying up large amounts of gold making it more difficult to get. The value of gold began to rise. Gould and Fisk made a deal with Abel Corbin, Grant's brother-in-law, to keep President Grant from selling government gold to drive the price down. In the face of rising prices and public concern, Grant finally chose to ignore Corbin's advice and he ordered the government to sell 4 million dollars of government gold. The price of gold dropped and the stock market crashed causing investors to lose lots of money. Good lawyers allowed Gould and Fisk to avoid jail.

In 1873, after twenty years without a pay raise, Congress voted an increase in pay for itself, the Supreme Court, the President, and other high officials. However, they made the raise retroactive to two years earlier. That is, they would be paid extra money for their work for the past two years as well. When Grant received the bill, he signed it. The public was outraged, called it a pay grab, and demanded the law be repealed. Grant took most of the blame. Congress repealed the bill shortly thereafter.

Secretary of War William W. Belknap had accepted bribes to allow companies to sell their products on Indian reservations. The House of Representatives impeached Belknap and the Senate was preparing to try him. However, Belknap gave and Grant accepted his resignation to quit his job. Now that he was no longer a government employee, the Senate had no authority over him.

7. How did Gould and Fisk control the gold market? (circle two)

- e. Gould ran the Treasury Department
- h. they bought large amounts of gold
- s. Corbin purposely gave bad advice to Grant
- y. Good lawyers worked for Gould and Fisk

8. Why did Grant get blamed for the pay raise? (infer—circle one)

- e. Congress blamed Grant
- h. Grant got more money than anyone else
- s. William W. Belknap received bribes
- y. Grant made the Congressional bill law

### End of Life

When Grant left office, Republicans had mixed feelings about his performance. However, by 1880, his image had revived and he almost won the Republican nomination to run for president for a third term.

Grant made several bad investments and lost most of his money. He needed to get money to support his family, so he wrote his autobiography. Unfortunately, his 20 cigar-a-day smoking habit gave him throat cancer. He died a few days after finishing his book. It sold thousands of copies and made a considerable amount of money for his family.

9. How did Grant earn money for his family? (circle one)

- e. he wrote a biography
- h. he sold his Civil War memorabilia
- s. he signed autographs
- y. he wrote an autobiography