

CIVIL WAR HERO TO POST-WAR PRESIDENT Ulysses Simpson Grant (1822 – 1885)

— *Bradley Rymph*

Ulysses S. Grant rose from humble beginnings on an Ohio farm to lead the Union armies to victory in the Civil War in 1865. Three years later — with his popularity soaring as a military hero, with Abraham Lincoln dead, and with the new President, Andrew Johnson, facing impeachment — he was elected to his first of two terms as U.S. President.

Grants' birth name was Hiram Ulysses Grant. When he was appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point at the age of 17, the Congressman who nominated him didn't know Grant's full name. He left out "Hiram" and added his mother's maiden

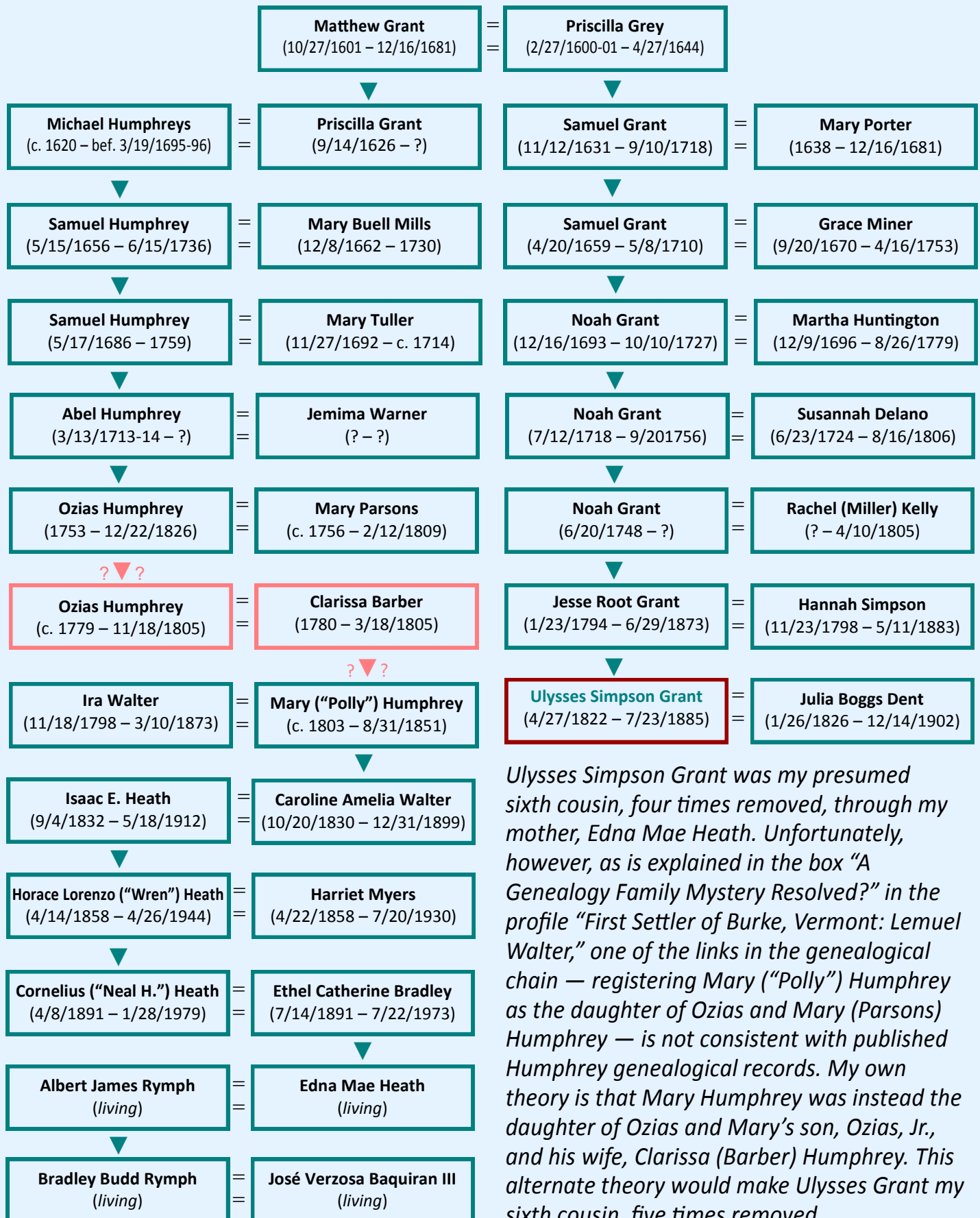
name, "Simpson," as if it were Grant's middle name.

Grant did not like military life and did not plan to make a career of the army. Nevertheless, he served through the Mexican War, fighting in almost every battle of the war, then served a tour of duty on the Pacific Coast at the Isthmus of Panama.

In 1854, Grant resigned from the army and returned home to a farm near St. Louis, given to him by his father-in-law. Unable to make farming pay, he shifted a few years later to selling real estate, then to assisting his father's leather business in Galena, Illinois.

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HOW WE'RE RELATED: Ulysses S. Grant



Ulysses Simpson Grant was my presumed sixth cousin, four times removed, through my mother, Edna Mae Heath. Unfortunately, however, as is explained in the box "A Genealogy Family Mystery Resolved?" in the profile "First Settler of Burke, Vermont: Lemuel Walter," one of the links in the genealogical chain — registering Mary ("Polly") Humphrey as the daughter of Ozias and Mary (Parsons) Humphrey — is not consistent with published Humphrey genealogical records. My own theory is that Mary Humphrey was instead the daughter of Ozias and Mary's son, Ozias, Jr., and his wife, Clarissa (Barber) Humphrey. This alternate theory would make Ulysses Grant my sixth cousin, five times removed.



*Ulysses S. Grant, 18th
President of the United States*

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Grant took responsibility for drilling volunteers in Galena. As the men he led grew in numbers, skills, and successes, Grant caught President Lincoln's notice. After his troops captured Vicksburg in July 1863, Grant was given command of all the federal armies in the West. Meanwhile, the war in the East had been going badly for the Union. In March 1864, Lincoln appointed Grant lieutenant general of the federal armies. Within little more than a year, Robert E. Lee had surrendered to Grant, and the Confederacy was defeated.

In 1866, Congress rewarded Grant by giving him the rank of full general — the first person designated as such since George Washington.

As President from 1869 to 1877, Grant worked to advance the South's

Reconstruction and supported the enactment of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, which stipulates that "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged ... on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Unfortunately, his two terms as President were also plagued by scandal, which led Grant to decide, reluctantly, not to see a third term.

TO LEARN MORE

Ulysses S. Grant Association. Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Collection. "Ulysses S. Grant Genealogy." (<http://library.msstate.edu/usgrant/genealogy.asp>)

Wikipedia. "Ulysses S. Grant." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulysses_S._Grant)