

commentary

from other pens...

History finds good to say about Grant

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — History's slant on Ulysses S. Grant is that he was a war-winning general but a failed president, a personally honest but bumbling chief executive whose administration reeked of corruption. As it has done with many other presidents — including Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower — history is taking a second look. "Grant," a new, full-dress biography by political scientist Jean Edward Smith, invites a closer inspection of the Civil War general's record.

"In the White House, he dominated the country's political scene for eight years, providing the stability that steadied the nation after years of war and upheaval," Smith writes of the 18th president.

Grant came to the presidency after the 1868 election as the restored nation's pre-eminent war hero.

"Let us have peace," the phrase with which he accepted the Republican nomination, came as a fitting bookend to his wartime assurance that "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

But eight years later, at the end of his second term, even Grant was acknowledging "mistakes have been made, as all can see and I admit."

One 20th century rating places Grant 38th among the first 42 presidents. One of his critics says he presided over "the Era of Good Stealings."

Smith, the John Marshall professor of political science at Marshall University in Huntington, W. Va., says Grant's achievements were significant and involved substantial political skill.

He singles out Grant's record in defending the rights of freed blacks, including ordering the Army to combat the Ku Klux Klan's campaigns.

"He fought for black equality long after his fellow countrymen had tired of 'the Negro question,'" Smith writes. "He defended the rights of African-Americans in the South with the same tenacity that held the Union line at Shiloh."

Smith says Grant also resisted efforts to annihilate the Plains Indians. The policy he established saved whole tribes but also led to the isolation of many American Indians on reservations.

Smith credits Grant with restoring relations with Britain and for laying the foundations of the Anglo-American alliance that still endures.

Although his efforts were unsuccessful, Grant took the first steps toward a merit-based civil service. "A true reform will let the office seek the man," he wrote.

During the financial panic of 1873, Grant vetoed an inflationary expansion of the nation's money supply, an action Smith credits for providing "the basis for the orderly growth of the American economy."

Grant also signed legislation creating Yellowstone National Park, the first link in the National Park System.

As general and president, Grant was a cigar-smoking, taciturn leader, plain-looking, grim in manner and often careless in dress.

Smith contends Grant's poor reputation as president began in the disdainful opinions of Eastern intellectuals of his time.

One critic was Henry Adams, who may have thought the presidency ran in the Adams family bloodstream. Speaking of the founder of the theory of evolution, he wrote: "The progress of evolution from President Washington to President Grant was evidence enough to upset Darwin."

Grant made a triumphal world tour after leaving office, then lost his personal fortune to a dishonest business partner.

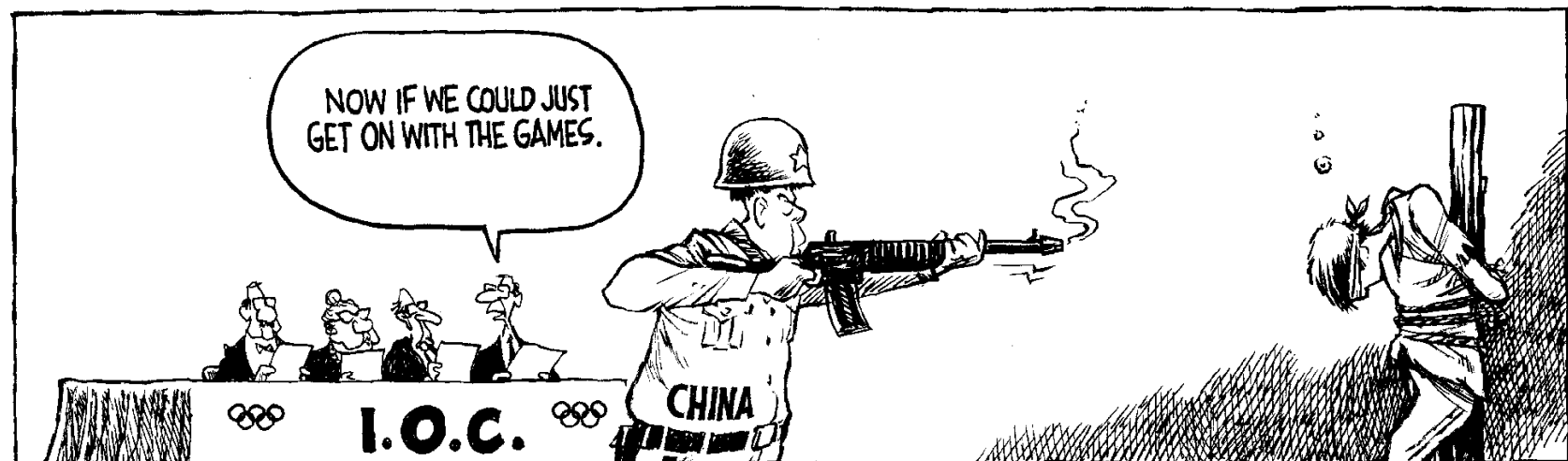
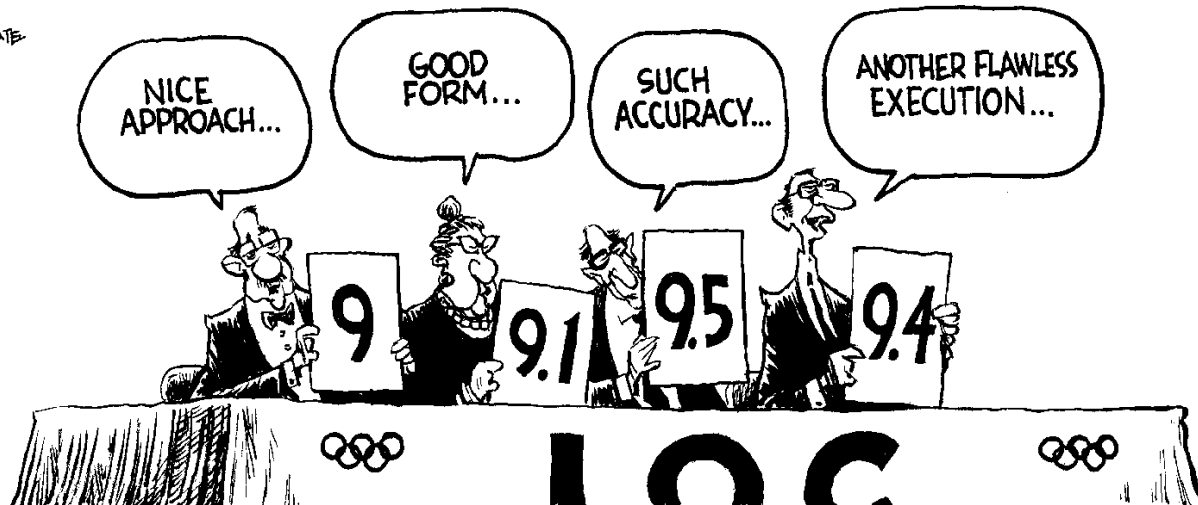
In the last months of his life, Grant finished a 275,000-word manuscript in a race against terminal throat cancer. The military memoir he produced was completed just days before his death on July 23, 1885. It earned \$450,000 for his widow. His presidency went unmentioned.

More than a million New Yorkers turned out when Grant was buried. The last words from his letter accepting the Republican presidential nomination can still be read above the portal of his tomb.

"Let Us Have Peace."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lawrence L. Knutson has covered the White House, Congress and Washington's history for more than 30 years.

ARJAN @ 2001 THE STATE



Remembering grandmother's special qualities

I haven't seen her in more than 15 years, but I still remember the scent of Oil of Olay on her skin, the way she squinted her eyes when her cigarette smoke drifted into them, how she was always fluffing up her short, curly, gray hair and what she sounded like when she called my mom "Berta."

My father raised me, so I didn't have much contact with my mother's side of the family. The only vivid memories I have of my grandmother is when I stayed at my grandparent's home in Boston when I was 4.

I wanted long hair like my cousin's, so my grandmother told me to brush my hair 100 times each day. I didn't know how to count to 100, so she sat me down on the bed and taught me.

She set out an outfit for me every morning and then would act disappointed when I chose a different pair of socks or shorts.

"What? You don't like my taste?" There was always another outfit laying on the



rachel miscall

• unraveling

It was the last day of classes at college, and my mother called to say she had passed away. I cried because I felt bad for my mom, but after I hung up the phone, it didn't take me long to forget about it.

That's until my sister-in-law called this month to say my grandfather had died. I cried then, because I realized my grandparents were gone and they were never coming back.

I remember my grandfather as a quiet, serious man. I remember his smile, his laugh and the sound of his voice, but not much more than that.

Whenever I think of him, I think of my grandmother. And I wish I had gotten a chance to get to know both of them better.

I wrote my grandfather a long letter last year. He was sick and it took him a few months to respond.

He sent a pair of my grandmother's earrings with a matching brooch. The card said, "If you write, I'll write back."

I meant to, but it's too late now.

Words of wisdom XXVIII: Business common sense

Usually on the fifth column of any given month, I try to share some lighter thoughts on everyday living. I turn to the great wordsmiths of the past, and use their quotes to give us all something to think about.

This week, I want to share some words of wisdom without known sources. Common sense is where you find it. Whether from a bumper sticker or a billboard, tee shirt or television, fortune cookie or commencement speech, good advice is still good advice.

I hope you won't discount the thought just because the source is unidentified. There's something here for everyone whether you're in business or not.

Words From the Unknown

- The most demanding boss anyone can have is a bad habit.
- Never give advice - sell it.
- Knowing without doing is like plowing and sowing without harvesting.
- Assign in a store: "Staying-in-business sale now in progress."
- It isn't the number of people employed in a business that make it successful. It's the number working.
- To succeed - keep your head up and your overhead down.
- The best business to avoid is other people's.
- Business is like a wheelbarrow - it stands still



don taylor

• minding your own business

unless somebody pushes it.

- Some things do not have to be learned. We're all born with a natural gift to make mistakes.
- Modern credit systems have made buying easier than it's ever been. Unfortunately, paying for it is still just as hard as it ever was.
- A shady business never produced a sunny life.
- Business is tough these days. If you do something wrong, you get sued or fired. If you do something right, you get taxed. (Sounds like something Will Rogers would have said.)
- Crime seems to be the only big business to escape government meddling.
- Character is like glass - even a small crack is visible to everyone.
- Honesty is one business policy that never has to change to keep up with the times.
- No business opportunity is ever lost. If one business loses it, another competitor will find it.
- How-to-get-rich-quick books should be filed under "fiction."
- In good times, business owners love to adver-

tise. In bad times, they have to.

- My wife and I started out with nothing. Today, we still have most of it.
 - When a check returns, you can be sure the customer won't.
 - A computer salesman told me his "Super Mega" computer would do half of my work for me. I bought two.
 - Knowledge is to business what fertilization is to farming.
 - The book How to Beat Inflation has just gone from \$14.95 to \$16.95.
 - No one ever climbed a hill by looking at it, talking about it or writing a plan for it.
 - Success is like underwear, we should have it without showing it off in public.
 - I consider every day to be lost in which I do not make a new acquaintance.
 - Luck is the result of choices we make. We create our own luck by choosing which opportunities to take advantage of. Everyone has opportunities, therefore anyone can be lucky.
 - Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.
- Don Taylor is the co-author of *Up Against the Wal-Marts. You may write to him in care of Minding Your Own Business, PO Box 67, Amarillo, TX 79105. Column sponsored by Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce Business Development Committee.*

City seems to be heading backwards

To the Editor:
I've lived on the farm all my life and I've lived near Goodland for almost 50 years. I love Goodland.

However, in the past few years, I think we've gone backwards instead of forwards. We've lost two grocery stores, a truck stop and several filling stations.

We have an abundance of parks. We have Gulick, Steever, Chambers, Philips, Rosewood and a nice ball park. Now they want to build a Pioneer Park.

Of course, the farmers (and probably business people, too) are stressed out three-quarters of the time. If you're stressed, go and relax in one of these parks. It'll do wonders for you. Take you're family for a picnic in the park.

Maybe you need a tone up, so go to the Good-



from our readers

• to the editor

less bread on the table.

Take a moment and think about it.
Esther Linin
Goodland

berry's world



The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

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The Associated Press

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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnav@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$22; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$28; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$95. (All tax included.) Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$25; six months, \$40; 12 months, \$75.

Incorporating:

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
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