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Childhoods of the Presidents

尤利西斯·S·格兰特

ULYSSES S. GRANT

【美】小阿瑟·M·史勒辛格 主编

【美】贝瑟尼·凯利·帕特里克 著

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★ *Introduction* ★

Alexis de Tocqueville began his great work *Democracy in America* with a discourse on childhood. If we are to understand the prejudices, the habits and the passions that will rule a man's life, Tocqueville said, we must watch the baby in his mother's arms; we must see the first images that the world casts upon the mirror of his mind; we must hear the first words that awaken his sleeping powers of thought. "The entire man," he wrote, "is, so to speak, to be seen in the cradle of the child."

That is why these books on the childhoods of the American presidents are so much to the point. And, as our history shows, a great variety of childhoods can lead to the White House. The record confirms the ancient adage that every American boy, no matter how unpromising his beginnings, can aspire to the presidency. Soon, one hopes, the adage will be extended to include every American girl.

All our presidents thus far have been white males who, within the limits of their gender, reflect the diversity of American life. They were born in nineteen of our states; eight of the last thirteen presidents were born west of the Mississippi. Of all our presidents, Abraham Lincoln had the

least promising childhood, yet he became our greatest president. Oddly enough, presidents who are children of privilege sometimes feel an obligation to reform society in order to give children of poverty a better break. And, with Lincoln the great exception, presidents who are children of poverty sometimes feel that there is no need to reform a society that has enabled them to rise from privation to the summit.

Does schooling make a difference? Harry S. Truman, the only twentieth-century president never to attend college, is generally accounted a near-great president. Actually nine— more than one fifth—of our presidents never went to college at all, including such luminaries as George Washington, Andrew Jackson and Grover Cleveland. But, Truman aside, all the non-college men held the highest office before the twentieth century, and, given the increasing complexity of life, a college education will unquestionably be a necessity in the twenty-first century.

Every reader of this book, girls included, has a right to aspire to the presidency. As you survey the childhoods of those who made it, try to figure out the qualities that brought them to the White House. I would suggest that among those qualities are ambition, determination, discipline, education— and luck.

—ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR.

序

亚历克西斯·德·托克维尔以讲述人的童年作为他的巨著《美国的民主》的开始。托克维尔说，如果我们想理解支配一个人生活的偏见、习惯和爱好，我们必须观察他还是襁褓中的婴孩这一时期的情况；我们必须审视世界投射到他心灵上的第一个印记；我们必须聆听唤醒他那沉睡中的思想力量的第一句话。他写道：“可以说，从婴孩时期的摇篮中将可以了解整个人。”

这就是为什么这套关于美国总统童年的书如此重要。另外，正如历史所展示的，尽管童年时代的经历多种多样，却都能引导一个人走上通往白宫的道路。历史的记录验证了一句古话：每个美国男孩，不管早期看起来前途多么无望，都能够立志成为总统。人们还希望，这句古话所涵盖的范围不久将扩展，把每个美国女孩也包括在内。

迄今为止，所有的美国总统都是白人男性，他们在有限的性别范围之内，反映了美国生活的多样性。他们出生于合众国的19个州；最后13位当中有8位出生在密西西比河西部。在所有的总统当中，亚伯拉罕·林肯的童年最显得前途无望，然而他却成为美国历史上最伟大的总统。非常奇怪的是，童年生活优裕的总统有时却有一种责任感，进行社会改革，给家庭贫苦的孩子创造更好的机会。而另一方面，除林肯是一个特例之外，出身贫苦的总统有时却感到，对于使他们从穷困的底层发展到事业颠峰的社会，没有进行改革的必要。

学校教育重要吗？哈里·S·杜鲁门是仅有的一位从未上过大学的20世纪的美国总统，然而却被普遍认为接近最伟大的总统。实际上，我们的总统当中有9位——占全部的五分之一还多——从未上过大学，包括乔治·华盛顿、安德鲁·杰克逊以及格罗弗·克利夫兰这些杰出的人物。但是，除杜鲁门以外，所有这些没上过大学却担任了总统这一最显要职务的人都生活在20世纪以前。由于社会生活变得越来越复杂，大学教育毫无疑问将成为21世纪美国总统的必备条件。

该书的每位读者，包括女孩在内，都有权立志当总统。你们在探讨这些总统的童年时，要努力去领悟是什么品质使他们当上了白宫的主人。我在这里做一提示，在这些品质当中包括志向、决心、纪律、教育——当然还有机会。

——小阿瑟·M·史勒辛格

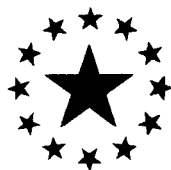


Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Strengths and Shortcomings..... | 2 |
| A Way with Horses..... | 12 |
| The Reluctant Tanner..... | 28 |
| A Quiet Cadet..... | 40 |
| War and Politics..... | 54 |
| Chronology..... | 74 |
| Glossary..... | 78 |

目 录

| | |
|--------------|----|
| 强项与弱点..... | 3 |
| 驭马之道..... | 13 |
| 身为皮匠心不甘..... | 29 |
| 无名小卒..... | 41 |
| 战争与政治..... | 55 |
| 年表..... | 75 |
| 词汇表..... | 78 |


Strengths and Shortcomings

When he was about eight years old, Ulysses Grant—who loved horses—desperately wanted a colt owned by a man named Robert Ralston. Ralston, who lived a few miles outside Ulysses's hometown of



第一章

强项与弱点



大约在八岁那年，酷爱马匹的尤利西斯·格兰特，为从一个名叫罗伯特·拉尔斯顿的人那里得到一匹小马驹，几乎不顾一切。尤利西斯家在俄亥俄州乔治镇，住在离他们家几英里外的拉尔斯顿主动提出将马卖给尤利西斯的父

General Ulysses S. Grant at the Battle of the Wilderness, May 1864. As head of all the Union armies, Grant practiced a grim, relentless approach to defeating the South that won him the nickname "Unconditional Surrender."

1864年5月瓦尔德尼斯战役中的尤利西斯·S·格兰特司令。身为联邦军统帅，格兰特秋风扫落叶般击败了南方军，并赢得了“无条件投降”。

Georgetown, Ohio, had offered to sell the horse to the boy's father. But Jesse Grant thought the asking price of \$25 was too high. Still, Ulysses was single-minded in his determination to have the colt. He begged and pestered his father relentlessly.

Years later, looking back on his famous life, Ulysses S. Grant would write about that boyhood experience in his *memoirs*. "My father yielded," he recalled, "but said twenty dollars was all the horse was worth, and told me to offer that price; if it was not accepted I was to offer twenty-two and a half, and if that would not get him, to give the twenty-five. I at once mounted a horse and went for the colt. When I got to Mr. Ralston's house, I said to him: 'Papa says I may offer you twenty dollars for the colt, but if you won't take that, I am to offer twenty-two and a half, and if you won't take that, I am to give you twenty-five.' "Needless to say, Ralston agreed to part with the animal only for the full \$25.

The way eight-year-old Ulysses Grant came to own Robert Ralston's colt certainly makes for a humorous tale. But the story also provides a glimpse at the character of an important figure in American history—a major Civil War general and, later, America's 18th president. Perhaps, too, the qualities that would lead to a string of business and political failures for the adult Ulysses Grant can be detected in the actions of the boy.

亲。但是杰西·格兰特认为要价二十五美元太贵了，然而尤利西斯横下一条心要拥有那匹小马。他苦苦地央求纠缠，把他父亲闹得不得安宁。

多年以后，回顾辉煌一生的时候，尤利西斯·S·格兰特在回忆录中记下了这段童年经历：“我的父亲屈服了，”他回忆道，“但坚持说这马最多值二十美元，并且叫我去报价。如果对方不接受，我就报二十二块五，如果那还不能成交，就付二十五块。我连忙飞奔上马去买那小马驹。等我到拉尔斯顿先生家时，我跟他说：‘我爸爸说了，我可以花二十块钱买你的马驹，但是如果你不同意，我就报价二十二块五，如果你还不同意，我就只能给你二十五块了。’”不消说，拉尔斯顿只同意以全价二十五美元转让马驹。

尤利西斯·格兰特在八岁时买下罗伯特·拉尔斯顿的那匹小马驹的经历当然可以作为一个有趣的幽默讲述。但通过这个小故事，也使我们能对美国历史上的重要人物——显赫的内战总司令，即后来的美国第18任总统的性格略见一斑。或许，那些导致了尤利西斯·格兰特成年后在生意和政治上一连串失利的品性，也都可以在他童年的行为中找到。



Just as the child's doggedness eventually wore down his father, enabling him to get the colt he wanted, the adult Ulysses Grant's doggedness eventually wore down the South, bringing the Civil War to an end. As a strategist, Grant was capable if not brilliant. His strength as a general lay in his single-minded determination. Nothing—not even huge numbers of ***casualties***—deterred him from his objective.

No one expects eight-year-olds to have the sophistication necessary to understand the motivations of adults, so it's no surprise that the young Ulysses failed in his attempt to bargain with Ralston. Interestingly, though, the adult Ulysses Grant was—like the child trying to buy a colt that had caught his eye—direct, honest, and unskilled at manipulating others. Throughout his life he also seems to have had difficulty in judging people—or at least in deciding which people could be trusted. His presidency was tainted by a host of scandals involving his close advisers, even though Grant himself remained honest. And toward the end of his life, when he should have been financially secure, he lost all his money after


The name Ulysses comes from the Roman translation of a Greek epic poem, Homer's *Odyssey*. In that poem the hero, Odysseus, or Ulysses, struggles to make his way home to Greece after fighting in the Trojan War.



童年的执拗最终磨垮了他父亲，帮助他获得心爱的马驹，同样，尤利西斯·格兰特成年后的固执也帮助他最终拖垮了南方军，使内战终结。作为战略家，格兰特是能干的，虽然还算不上杰出。作为司令，他的长处在于目标专一，无论怎样——即使伤亡惨重——也阻止不了他追求目标的决心。

没人会指望八岁的孩子就拥有足够的社会经验理解成年人的动机，所以难怪稚嫩的尤利西斯在同拉尔斯顿的讨价还价中败下阵来。有趣的是，尤利西斯·格兰特成年后依然像当初要买中意马驹的那个男孩一样耿直、诚实，而且缺乏控制别人的技巧，他似乎一辈子总是不擅于判断别人——至少要分辨清哪些人是可以信赖的。尽管他自身清廉，但他的名声却因一系列涉及他贴身顾问的丑闻而蒙垢。在他最后的时光里，理应是衣食无忧了，但他倾囊投资的一家公司倒闭，使得他倾家荡产——那些管理人员恰巧都是些刁猾奸诈的人。

尤利西斯一词源自荷马创作的希腊史诗《奥德赛》的罗马译本。在该诗中，主人公奥德修斯或作尤利西斯在经历特洛伊战争之后历经艰辛返回故乡希腊。



the failure of a firm in which he'd invested heavily—and whose officers happened to be crooked.

Of course, it's impossible to understand Ulysses S. Grant without knowing about his parents. His father, Jesse R. Grant of Deerfield, Ohio, was one of eight children born to Captain Noah Grant and his second wife, Rachel, in the space of just 11 years. When his wife died, Noah Grant—poor and with so many mouths to feed—was forced to **apprentice**^① his older boys. Jesse was only 11 when he was sent to work on a farm about 25 miles away. Two years later, he began to learn the leather-making^② trade as an apprentice in Maysville, Kentucky. He soon returned to Ohio, though, because Kentucky was slave-owning territory. He said, "I would not own slaves and I would not live where there were slaves and not own them."

In 1821, at the age of 27 and now the owner of a **tannery**, Jesse Grant married 23-year-old Hannah Simpson of Point Pleasant, Ohio. Hannah, who was quiet and reserved, came from an upstanding family that had farmed in the area for several generations. She was also a devout Methodist^③, with views against slavery like Jesse's.

注：① 学徒：一个人经过合法协议必须为另一个人工作一定时间，以回报得到商业或艺术上的指导。



当然，我们如果对他的父母一无所知，也就不可能了解尤利西斯·格兰特。他的父亲叫杰西·R·格兰特，生于俄亥俄州迪尔菲尔德，是诺亚·格兰特上尉与第二任妻子拉歇尔在11年里所生的八个孩子之一。在妻子去世后，诺亚·格兰特——此时穷困潦倒又有那么多张嘴等着吃饭——不得不将大些的男孩子送去当学徒。杰西只有11岁的时候就被送到25英里外的农场上干活。两年后，他在肯塔基州梅斯镇做学徒的时候学会了制革手艺。然而，他不久就返回俄亥俄，因为在肯塔基允许拥有奴隶。他说：“我不愿意拥有奴隶，也不愿意不拥有奴隶却生活在蓄奴州。”

1821年，27岁的杰西·格兰特已经成了鞣革厂老板，他娶了23岁的汉纳·辛普森为妻，她住在俄亥俄州波因特普莱森特。汉纳为人娴静内秀，祖上是已经在此耕种数辈的朴实家庭，她还是虔诚的卫理公会教徒，与杰西一样反对奴隶制。

注：② 鞣皮（法）：将生皮制成皮革的工艺或过程。

③ 卫理公会派教徒：基督教新教路德教会的成员，此教会建立在英格兰的约翰和查尔斯·卫斯理在18世纪初期提出的原则之上，以积极关心社会福利和公众道德为特点。





The couple moved into a two-room house with a fireplace at one end overlooking the Ohio River. On April 27, 1822, their first child was born. The baby was a strapping boy who weighed more than 10 pounds. The Grants didn't name him immediately, but discussed many options before choosing "Hiram" (which Hannah's father liked) and "Ulysses," after Jesse's favorite literary character. Throughout his childhood the Grants called him Ulysses or Lyss.

