



The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Volume 19: July 1, 1868 - October 31, 1869

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This volume carries Ulysses S. Grant through a brief period of welcome calm to the storms of the White House. Seemingly resigned to becoming president, Grant detached himself from military routine in Washington, D.C., during the summer of 1868 to tour the Great Plains. He then settled in Galena to escape the clamor of the presidential campaign. Grant reveled in his respite from official duties, writing to his father, "I have enjoyed my summers vacation very much and look forward with dread to my return to Washington." Grant's residence in Galena shielded him from public scrutiny. "Whilst I remain here I shall avoid all engagements to go any place at any stated time. The turn out of people is immense when they hear of my coming." Grant remained in or near his prewar hometown until the election forced him back to Washington.

Grant publicly said that he accepted presidential responsibilities "without fear" but privately lacked eagerness for the office. Even before his electoral victory, he wrote disapprovingly of "the Army of office seekers" and "begging letters" from potential appointees. Never enamored with the "pulling and hauling" so much a part of politics, Grant tried to minimize importunities by withholding names of his cabinet selections until after his inauguration and keeping his policy pronouncements spare and noncontroversial. His earnest desire as president was simply to inspire every citizen to work for "a happy Union."



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