



REPLACED GRANT MONUMENT

and the need to replace
it!

Praça Ulysses S. Grant

BOLAMA,

GUINEA-BISSAU

11°34'37.96"N,
15°28'28.38"W

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Wednesday, July 6, 2022

Historian explores Grant statue's African odyssey



My photo from Bolama in 2020
RJ Peltz-Steele CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Martin H. "Jay" Joyce, author and my colleague in the exploration of historical curiosities, has authored a new article about the origins and winding story of the statue of U.S. President Ulysses S Grant on the island of Bolama in Guinea-Bissau and its two appearances on Bissauan postage stamps.

I have written about the Grant doppelganger's odyssey previously, in [March 2020](#), when I got some of the facts wrong, and in [November 2020](#), when I corrected and updated the record. Now Joyce has dived deep. He teases his piece thus:

In the March-April 2020 issue of *Topical Time*, Mr. George Ruppel recounted the story of why Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau) issued stamps in 1946 and again in 1970, featuring Ulysses S. Grant. Grant was honored for arbitrating a dispute between Portugal and Great Britain during his presidential administration in favor of Portugal. The crux of the dispute involved territorial rights over the island of Bolama, just off West Africa's coast... In the mid-twentieth century, Bolama frequently appeared in the philatelic press because of the

Pan-American Airways Clipper airmail routes, which used Bolama as a stopping point before proceeding across the South Atlantic....

An internet search for statues of American presidents around the world rarely includes this statue. Why not? As former ABC News radio commentator Paul Harvey would say, "Here's the rest of the story...."

The article is *Ulysses S. Grant in Portuguese Guinea—the Rest of the Story*, *Topical Time*, May-June 2022, at 60. *Topical Time* is the journal of the [American Topical Association](#).

Joyce is a 1974 graduate of the United States Military Academy. He is the author of *Postmarked West Point: A US Postal History of West Point and its Graduates*, a winner of a Vermeil award at the 2021 Great American Stamp Show. His forthcoming work from La Posta Publications is *The West Point Post Office: 1815-1981: Keeping It All in the Family—Nepotism, Paternalism and Political Patronage, ... and Dedication to the Corps*.

Posted by [Richard Peltz-Steele](#) at 4:00 PM

Labels: [American Topical Association](#), [art](#), [foreign policy](#), [Guinea-Bissau](#), [history](#), [Martin Joyce](#), [philately](#), [Portugal](#), [postal service](#), [travel](#), [Ulysses S. Grant](#), [West Africa](#)

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Mystery: Who Took the Head of Ulysses S. Grant?

October 5, 2007 12:01 AM ET

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

By

[Ofeibea Quist-Arcton](#)

Lucinda Barbosa Ahukharie, chief of the judicial police in Bissau, and a member of her staff hold a hand from the demolished statue.

Only metal pieces remain of the Ulysses S. Grant statue. Its head is still missing.

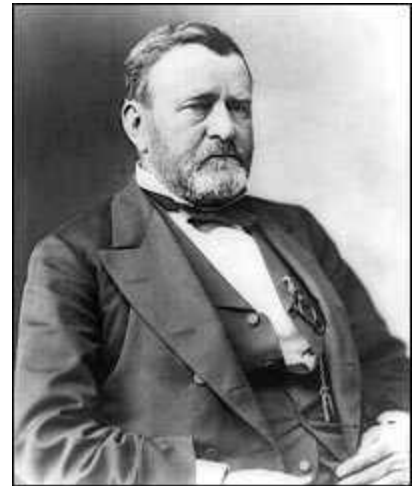


President Ulysses S. Grant was considered a hero in Guinea-Bissau.

Library of Congress

It's well known that Ulysses S. Grant was a great Civil War

general. But in a lesser-known bit of history, the 18th president of the United States was also revered in the West African country of Guinea-Bissau.



Recently, though, a metal statue of Grant in that country went missing, only to be found buried — headless and sliced into pieces.

The mystery of what happened to Grant's head continues to puzzle local police.

In the 1800s, Grant helped resolve a bitter dispute between Guinea-Bissau's then colonial ruler, Portugal, and its rival Great Britain. In gratitude, the Portuguese erected a statue of the American president in the old capital Bolama. When Portugal was swept from power after the liberation war of independence in the 1970s, many vestiges of Guinea-Bissau's colonial past, such as statues, were demolished. Ulysses S. Grant managed to survive.

But towards the end of August, the metal statue of the former American president mysteriously disappeared. After journalistic and police investigations, the statue — now headless — was traced to a scrap yard. Scrap metal is a valued commodity in Guinea-Bissau. The metal merchant and the governor of Bolama Island were taken in for questioning.

The head of the judicial police, Lucinda Barbosa Ahukharie, whose family comes from Bolama, said the metal statue had been chopped up into about a dozen large pieces. But his head was still missing.

Ahukharie was rather sad about the whole sorry episode. She said the legacy of the one-time American president was tied up with Guinea-Bissau's and her own history and heritage.

"Ulysses Grant is part of our legacy," the police chief says. "He was from the colonial era and part of a heritage that we should preserve. He's part of Guinea-Bissau's history. He belongs to my family history, too. It was a pity someone had to chop him up."

Ahukharie says police have some leads and hope to find Grant's head, so that they can put their old American friend back together again.

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Monday, November 16, 2020

Grant group investigates curious reappearance of US President in Guinea-Bissau island 'ghost town'

Earlier this year, I [wrote](#) about the short, strange life of statues in Guinea-Bissau, and, in particular, the strange-upon-strange birth, disappearance, and re-creation of a statue of U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant in an abandoned park in the "ghost town" of Bolama Island.

In March, I [reported](#) that, since going missing [mysteriously](#) in 2007, the Grant statue "was recovered in pieces, and authorities ultimately restored him."

Not quite so.

[Grant Monument Association](#) (GMA) President Frank J. Scaturro ([Twitter](#)), by day an attorney and historian who is vice-president and senior counsel at the [Judicial Crisis Network](#), noticed that my March photo of the statue did not look like the original.



Original statue by Manuel Pereira da Silva



New statue by Zinho Ká

From GMA newsletter, vol. XVI, no. 1, fall 2020, at 4, my photo at right.

Scaturro and the GMA dug into the mystery of the statue's reappearance in the middle of the barren park that was once Guinea-Bissau's glorious "Praça Ulysses S. Grant." (As to why there is a monument to a U.S. President at all on this West African island, see my [March post](#).) The pieces of the original statue never have been recovered.

The latest GMA newsletter (vol. XVI, no. 1, fall 2020) explains how the present likeness of Grant came to be in 2018:

This occurred at the initiative of then-Governor Quintino Rodrigues Bone. Approximately 100,000 CFA francs (roughly U.S. \$180) were spent from the local government fund to obtain supplies for the work—a harness, cement, gravel, and colorless paint. With these materials, a local artist, Luizinho (Zinho) Ká, constructed a cement statue. He did not receive any compensation for his work.



Your intrepid blogger visits the cane rum distillery in Quinhámel, Guinea-Bissau, in March. (RJ Peltz-Steele CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

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....

According to the State Department, there is local interest in replacing the cement statue with a new bronze replica of the destroyed statue, but no funding to do so.



A March 2018 photo shows a still empty pedestal. (Helena Maria Pestana CC BY-SA 4.0)



My dispatch from Guinea-Bissau came just before the cancel-culture [toppling of monuments](#) across the United States. Sadly, the fall 2020 GMA newsletter also reported the vandalism and toppling of a Grant bust in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in June.

Scaturro said, "It is ironic that a monument to Grant was restored in Guinea-Bissau soon before another was torn down in San Francisco. Americans who do not respect our heritage can learn a lesson from the people of Guinea-Bissau."

Anyone can [join](#) the New York-based Grant Monument Association or [visit](#) the [General Grant National Memorial](#) in New York ([check](#) for covid updates). Scaturro wrote in a statement on Grant's civil rights record:

As the principal author of Union victory during the Civil War, Grant was the principal enforcer of the Emancipation Proclamation. As president, he secured laws that enforced the recently ratified 13th and 14th Amendments and acted decisively to ensure the ratification of a 15th Amendment that would ban racial discrimination in voting. His achievements included five enforcement acts, the creation of the Justice Department, and the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which desegregated various modes of public accommodations and transportation. Grant repeatedly employed military intervention to enforce Reconstruction and crushed the 19th-century Ku Klux Klan. Among America's top leaders, from military commanders to presidents, none has a more sweeping record on civil rights.

The GMA hosts periodic programs of interest to the public and historians. On November 19, at 7 p.m. US EST, the GMA will host an online colloquy, "A discussion of the partnership between General Ulysses S. Grant & General William T. Sherman," featuring General David Petraeus and Ulysses S. Grant Association Executive Director John Marszalek. [GMA members](#) receive registration information.

- **SKILLS:** legal writing for seminars
- **STUDENT WORK:** FOI Law; Comparative Law

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ONLINE COLLOQUY

A discussion of the partnership between
General Ulysses S. Grant & General William T. Sherman



with
General David Petraeus
and
John Marszalek

Executive Director & Managing Editor, Ulysses S. Grant Association
Editor of scholarly annotated editions of the memoirs
of General Grant and (forthcoming) General Sherman

Thurs., Nov. 19 7 p.m. ET / 6 p.m. CT www.grantstomb.org

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Welcome to The Savory Tort



Chan. Prof. Richard J. Peltz-Steele

About The Savory Tort

I am a law professor, and this is my space to ruminate on the law of torts, as well as my related teaching and research interests in journalism and mass communication, civil rights, sport, comparative law, social and economic development, and transparency and accountability. Like a **savory torte**, lots of ingredients make this blog delicious!

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Posted by [Richard Peltz-Steele](#) at [9:00 AM](#)

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MISSING GRANT STATUE REPLACED IN GUINEA-BISSAU

In 1870, President Grant arbitrated a dispute between Great Britain and Portugal over the island of Bolama, situated in western Africa between mainland Guinea and the Bijagós Islands, in Portugal's favor. Bolama, the island's main town, would go on to serve for over six decades as the capital of Portuguese Guinea, a colony of Portugal that would attain independence as Guinea-Bissau in 1974.

In approximately 1955, the Portuguese government put up a statue of Grant in appreciation of his role in the region's history. The statue sat in a square named for him (Praça Ulysses S. Grant). It was the creation of Portuguese sculptor Manuel Pereira da Silva, and it survived long after independence, even as other statues dating back to the colonial period came down. The design of the statue was distinctive: It depicted Grant standing in the civilian dress of a president, unlike any other statue of Grant in any public square in the United States. Bolama also has a primary school named for Grant.

But in August 2007, the statue disappeared and was found cut into about a dozen pieces by vandals. The pieces were traced by the judicial police to a scrap yard and recovered, but the head was missing. It was reported at the time that the police hoped to find the head and put the statue back together again. That apparently did not happen, but it was not the end of the story.



pereiradasilva.blogspot.com

*Original statue by Manuel
Pereira da Silva*



R.J. Peltz-Steele

*New statue by
Zinho Ká*

According to information obtained by the U.S. Department of State, a police investigation came in 2016 after Guinea-Bissau's former Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Adiatu Nandigna, filed a criminal complaint, but the suspects in the statue's vandalism and theft were ultimately cleared due to a lack of evidence.

Although the whereabouts of the earlier discovered pieces are now unknown, another statue of Grant took its place in 2018 on the original pedestal. This occurred at the initiative of then-Governor Quintino Rodrigues Bone. Approximately 100,000 CFA francs (roughly U.S. \$180) were spent from the local government fund to obtain supplies for the work—a harness, cement, gravel, and colorless paint. With these materials, a local artist, Luizinho (Zinho) Ká, constructed a cement statue. He did not receive any compensation for his work.

Although this development occurred two years ago, it came to the GMA's attention by way of a March 2020 blogpost by Richard J. Peltz-Steele, a professor at the University of Massachusetts Law School, which included a photo of the new statue.

According to the State Department, there is local interest in replacing the cement statue with a new bronze replica of the destroyed statue, but no funding to do so.

Frank Scaturro, the GMA's president, expressed hope that such funding would be provided in the future, but he applauded the artist and all those who were responsible for doing what they have in the meantime to reverse the effects of vandalism. He observed, "It is ironic that a monument to Grant was restored in Guinea-Bissau soon before another was torn down in San Francisco. Americans who do not respect our heritage can learn a lesson from the people of Guinea-Bissau."

Newsletter of the Grant Monument
Association

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