MISSISSIPPI
LIBRARIES

Contents

On the cover: *Spring Flowers* by Shane Hand, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Leland Speed Library.
These Mexican Petunias grow near the heart of campus at Mississippi College. During my lunch hour each day, I find it relaxing to wander from the library with my camera and take pictures of flowers, various structures, and squirrels.

President's Page

This year's legislative advocacy campaign theme, Libraries Connect, was all about connecting our state lawmakers with the importance of Mississippi libraries. During the 2018 legislative session, groups of librarians and supporters from all around the state showed up at the capitol each Wednesday to be seen and more importantly heard! They were recognized in both the House and Senate galleries and spent valuable time talking to their local lawmakers about the importance of Mississippi libraries and funding to support them. These visits played a valuable role in keeping libraries at the forefront of the conversation while providing advocacy opportunities for public library leaders and staff.

We packed the rotunda of the Mississippi State Capitol on March 13 for Library Day at the Capitol! Exhibits were set up highlighting some of the wonderful public library programs and services from around the state as well as exhibits highlighting the Mississippi Library Association and the Mississippi Library Commission. Outside the capitol, lawmakers could tour First Regional Library's *Library Connect* van, which allows rural communities access to library collections and services including internet access and public computers.

It was a great day for connecting Mississippi libraries with local lawmakers. I want to thank Meredith Wickham, MLA Legislative Committee chair, Sharman Smith, Susan Liles, and the rest of the staff at MLC for putting together such a successful Library day.

Plans are underway for Mississippi's delegation to attend ALA's National Library Legislative Day in Washington, D.C. on May 7-8, 2018. This event will bring together hundreds of library supporters who will meet with their members of Congress to advocate for library funding at the national level.

The MLA Executive Board had the opportunity to connect with the new Executive Director of the Mississippi Library Commission at our March board meeting. Mr. Hulen Bivens began serving in his new role on March 1, 2018. He comes to MLC with over 40 years of library management experience and has served state libraries in South Carolina, North Dakota, and Alabama. I am excited to work with Mr. Bivens and to continue to strengthen the partnership between MLA and the Mississippi Library Commission!

I want to urge each of you to connect with MLA. If you are not a current member, we would love to have you join us. You can find information on how to become a member on our webpage, www.misslib.org/join. If you are a current member

and want to get more involved, we are always looking for volunteers for standing and conference committees. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me and I can connect you with the best opportunity for you!

Another fantastic way to connect with Mississippi libraries is by attending the MLA Annual Conference. This year's conference will take place at the MSU Riley Center in Meridian, MS from October 16-19, 2018. It is hard to believe that conference will be here in just a few short months. Vice-President, Sarah Crisler-Ruskey, and her committee chairs are already hard at work to ensure that everyone has a fantastic conference experience!

Libraries Connect is much more than just an advocacy campaign theme. It is what we as an association do every day. We connect librarians, staff, and supporters together through MLA's mission of providing professional leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and the library profession.

As always, if you have any issues or questions for the executive board, please do not hesitate to contact the MLA office or one of the board members!

Library Legislative Day

Meredith E. Wickham
Chair, MLA Legislative Committee

Over 75 librarians and library supporters gathered at the State Capitol on Tuesday, March 13th for Mississippi's Library Legislative Day. They came from around the state to speak to their State Representatives and Senators, to display the exciting programs happening in their libraries, and to be introduced from the floor of the two houses of state government. Cookies supplied by the Mississippi Library Association were delivered to all Mississippi legislators on behalf of MLA with the message "Libraries Connect." Exhibits of library programs and organizations in the Rotunda and on the Capitol grounds were organized by the Mississippi Library Commission and Mississippi Library Association.

This event was the culmination of 10 weeks of legislative advocacy visits by librarians and library supporters from all parts of Mississippi. The positive energy put into advocating for Mississippi Libraries was infectious, and the turnout was impressive. Special thanks go to every single person who made the effort to show up and make a difference for Mississippi Libraries! We could not have done it without you.

To join MLA, or to renew your membership:

http://misslib.org/membership

2018 MLA Executive Board Minutes:

http://misslib.org/page-1860500

MOOCs as Professional Development for Librarians

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Librarians – particularly academic librarians – looking for free or low-cost professional development opportunities should consider MOOCs or Massive Open Online Courses. MOOCs are more in-depth than webinars but less intense than traditional credit-bearing courses. While fitting a MOOC into a librarian's busy schedule may not be an easy task, most of the major MOOC providers allow learners to "audit" courses free of charge and at a relaxed pace. There are many MOOCs from which to choose, including some that relate directly to library work.

MOOCs are courses – often originally based on traditional courses provided at established universities – that have been translated into an online format and made available to anyone with an internet connection, mostly free of charge. Courses are comprised of recorded lectures, short video clips, computer-graded exercises, discussion boards, and sometimes peer-graded assignments. "Traditional online courses charge tuition, carry credit and limit enrollment to a few dozen to ensure interaction with instructors. The MOOC, on the other hand, is usually free, credit-less and, well, massive," says Laura Pappano (2012) in her article on MOOCs for *The New York Times* (para 8).

The three major MOOC providers are Coursera, edX, and Udacity. Coursera and Udacity are for-profit enterprises, while edX, which began as a partnership between Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is a non-profit. MOOCs are asynchronous, with limited constraints on time and place, but the pacing of courses varies by provider and individual instructor(s). In many Coursera courses, for example, a "unit" comprised of a series of video lectures are uploaded each week, and participants have to view these lectures and complete any accompanying assignments within a specified time-frame. However, if participants are not interested in receiving a certificate of completion, they need not worry as much about these deadlines. Those who do wish to receive an official certificate, however, must meet all deadlines and provide proof that they are who they say they are.

In recent years, MOOC providers have been developing various types of certificate programs. For example, Coursera now offers "specializations," which are bundles of related courses on a topic with a final capstone project ("Specializations," n.d.). While any participant can access course materials like lecture recordings and readings, only those who enroll in a specialization for credit are able to access graded assignments. They must provide proof of identity and pay for each course individually or sign on for a monthly subscription plan (Willerer, 2016). Specialization prices vary. Likewise, edX has begun partnering with several higher education institutions to offer what they refer to as "MicroMasters." These are sequences of graduate-level courses developed by partnering universities. Those who complete a MicroMaster "may apply to the university offering credit for the MicroMasters certificate and, if accepted, can pursue an accelerated and less expensive Master's Degree" ("MicroMasters programs," 2016). As with Coursera's specializations, participants must verify their identities and pricing for MicroMasters varies by topic and institution.

Several articles published within the last five years address the impact MOOCs might have on libraries, particularly academic libraries. Much of the literature focuses on supporting the learners who enroll in MOOCs or the instructors who create these courses rather than on how librarians themselves might make use of MOOCs. Some of the activities the authors of these articles discuss include helping MOOC creators find and select high-quality open educational resources that they can integrate into their courses, creating LibGuides for MOOCs that feature these resources, and serving as experts on MOOC-related copyright issues (Mahraj, 2012; Barnes, 2013; Becker, 2013; Brooker, 2014; Gore 2014; Miller, 2013; Mune, 2015; Wu, 2013). Many also address the challenges involved in supporting MOOCS such as the inability to provide a potentially large number of MOOC participants unaffiliated with their institutions access to

various library resources and services due to licensing agreements with vendors (Barnes, 2013; Becker, 2013; Gore, 2014; Miller, 2013; Mune, 2015; Wu, 2013).

Wu (2013), however, does briefly discuss whether or not librarians should take MOOCs and concludes that they should. "By simply observing how courses are organized and delivered, or better yet, by actually completing a few courses, librarians can learn from a wide range of pedagogical approaches that could possibly be adapted for library instruction," she contends (Wu, 2013, p. 584). She also suggests that subject librarians might benefit from enrolling in MOOCs related to the disciplines they support to stay aware of the "latest theories and disciplinary vocabulary" (p. 584).

One major advantage of MOOCs is that participants get the content and feel of a "real" face-to-face or online course without the pressure and stress that comes from taking a course for credit and a grade, particularly a course for which they or their institution might be paying. Not having to worry about missing assignments or getting a bad grade if something urgent comes up at work or in their personal lives can help librarians at understaffed institutions better incorporate this type of professional development into their workweeks. The asynchronous nature of MOOCs also provides the flexibility librarians in public-facing roles may require if their schedules change from week-to-week (as schedules sometimes do during the instruction-heavy parts of a semester). There is no penalty for dropping a MOOC, unless the participant is paying for an official certificate of completion.

Another major MOOC benefit is that participants get to learn from some of the greatest thinkers and teachers from universities and institutes across the globe. Librarians can use MOOCs to keep their knowledge and skills fresh and/or to gain familiarity with fields of study in which they have little experience. Plus, MOOCs are more in-depth than a webinar or conference program, so participants will likely come away from a MOOC with a better grasp of the subject than they might from a webinar.

There are, of course, also several downsides to taking MOOCs. First of all, participants receive no official credit unless they are willing to pay for a (verified) certificate. Unlike many traditional forms of higher education or continuing education, most MOOCs and MOOC providers are not accredited. As a result, the stakes are not as high as they would be in a traditional course. This might lead to a lack of motivation for some participants, especially librarians with many other (more) pressing work commitments.

To get the most out of a MOOC, staying motivated is key. If this becomes an issue, it may help to schedule time each day or week to view the video lectures, do any readings, and complete the assignments. Another good strategy is to be accountable another person – a friend, family member, or co-worker. Several co-workers could sign up for a class together, for instance. If there enough interest within a library in a particular MOOC or series of MOOCs, a study group could be formed. Participants can discuss the material and how it relates to their library work or community with one another. Wu (2013) advocates for this, writing that "[l]ibrary administrators or supervisors should allow their direct reports to take MOOCs as a type of professional development. Legitimize the participation by organizing a 'MOOC Group' where interested librarians can discuss their experiences and share takeaways" (p. 584).

A MOOC study group or meet-up group can be more or less formal, depending on the needs – and schedules – of the librarians involved. When my institution was in the midst of learning more about research data management with the intent of launching a new service, several us enrolled in Research Data Management and Sharing, a MOOC created by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Edinburgh and offered through Coursera. One co-worker and I met once a week to watch the course lecture videos together. While this kept this check-in fairly informal, it helped me stay on schedule and made learning the material more enjoyable.

There a several MOOCs currently on offer that relate to the work that librarians do such as instructional design, data science, research data management, and open educational resources. It is important to note that the quality of MOOCs can vary widely by instructor and provider. Many providers ask participants to rate and offer feedback on courses they take, and this information is available on each course's page. Third-party websites like Class Central (https://www.class-central.com), also provide ratings and reviews of MOOCs that can be sorted

by topic, overall rating, provider, and course start date, among other characteristics. Some recent or on-going MOOCs (or sequences of MOOCs) that may be of interest to librarians:

- Copyright for Educators & Librarians (Coursera)
- Public Library Management (edX)
- Research Data Management and Sharing (Coursera)
- Data Science Specialization (Coursera)
- Open Education and OERs Repositories (edX)

- Introduction to Project Management (edX)
- Instructional Design and Technology (edX)

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More than Boxes and Bags

How to Share Your Community's Story through Digitization

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"These materials will document disciplines, culture and history for future generations, the evidence that we build nations upon."

-Meredith R. Evans, Modern Special Collection: Embracing the Future While Taking Care of the Past.

The big, scary word of our profession right now is, digitization. It brings staff to their knees in fear, and grant money quickly to your programs. Some libraries build their collections solely on digital items, and others go out into the community and digitize their patron's materials. Many libraries have collections that have been hidden on their shelves for generations. There is no wrong way to engage in digitization.

The Singing River Genealogy-Local History Library never dreamed they would have a paper archive, let alone a digital one. Singing River started their digitization program in about 2010, with a scanner-capable copier, a desktop computer, and a stack of family history files. But what is the definition of digitization; what can be accomplished with this process?

WHY DIGITIZATION?

Dictionary.com defines digitization as a verb; the act of converting information to a digital form; a simple and easily understood concept in our technology-soaked lives. But what is its purpose; where is the why? Ah, the 'Why' question. Every manager's favorite question when proposing a new idea. Why do we need this? In his 2005 article, *Digitizing Special Collections: to boldly go where we've been before*, Peter Michel points out the two purposes or uses for digitization: preservation and exhibition. Preservation utilizes the need to protect rare and valuable items from destruction. Fires, and floods are not as catastrophic if you have the lost materials backed up to an off-site server. Exhibiting brings a greater and wider spread attention to your collection. It can be blowing up the digital surrogate to poster size to promote the collection, or use the images in a traveling exhibit. Uploading the image to your institution's Facebook page with some information on the history and how

patrons can see more of the materials. Any of these purposes shows your institution's dedication to promoting and protecting the collections that have been placed in your trust.

Building a Program

Digitization programs can be as big and as small as you wish. You can spend $50,000 on a DTAtom scanner or use the HP Officejet Pro that sits on your desk. You can build your own website, partner with the Mississippi Digital Library, or display your collections on your Instagram. Any style or setup your institution choses is still going to bring eyes to your materials.

But you need more than interest in what is hiding on your shelves. You need a plan. Ideas on what to digitize and why. Do you have a set project in mind? Maybe an anniversary is coming up and you wish to celebrate it with a digital exhibit. Singing River launched their website on December 7, 2017, Pearl Harbor Day, with photographs of a World War II military installation in Jackson County, and letters from a local sailor, to his family back home.

Are there materials that are in danger of deteriorating and must be scanned immediately? Or it may be possible that you are digitizing on a "Per Request" basis. Many photo negatives contract "Vinegar Syndrome" after sitting on the shelf for a long time. This deterioration can be cause for pushing digitizing negatives up to the top of your list.

After piecing together an understanding of which direction you wish to start with, now you must consider: What technology do I need? Photographs, and flat documents can be scanned on a flatbed, but your books should be scanned by an overhead scanner or photographed to preserve the spine. If you are digitizing for exhibiting purposes, how are you wishing to exhibit? Singing River decided to create a website through open source software, particularly, Omeka. Through Omeka, we are able to use various plugins to create interactive exhibits for our patrons. One such plugin is called Neatline and allows the user to travel along a time line or travel the globe through geotagged collections. Institutions can lay their exhibit out on a Google map and coordinate through place, or they can layer additional pictures, such as one of their artifacts, and add time lines and points of interest pertaining to the information they wish to convey.

Your plan should also take into account who your target audience is. If you are a public library, you may want to think about creating exhibits for teachers to use in their classrooms. Not only can your digitization program promote your materials, but it can be a fantastic outreach tool for your institution. You want to think about the kind of artifacts that would be interesting to your target audience, and how you should word your exhibits. If you wish to exhibit to grade school children, you will want to watch the level of vocabulary you use.

Have a Partner

Many institutions with original materials such as photographs, loose papers, and rare items tend to be small, public institutions, low on staff and funds, but high on determination and want to serve their communities as best as they can. Having community partners can be a huge boost to your program as you begin to set goals and plan your course of action. We at Singing River partner with the Jackson County Historical and Genealogical Society, our local historical society, and with the Mississippi Digital Library. Mississippi institutions interested in digitizing their materials can have no better partner than the Mississippi Digital Library (MDL). First and foremost, they provide a free platform for their partners to display their collections on. Secondly, MDL teaches their new partners about digitization, gives expert advice on technology and workflow, and provides training for staff and volunteers to help get programs up, and running. All at no cost to the partnering institution. Lastly, MDL gives out several grants a year to their partner institutions. These grants are for digitization work hours from MDL staff. Their staff will visit your collections and help digitize items. Did I mention that the Mississippi Digital Library does not charge their partners anything? It's all free. Even becoming a partner.

Singing River Digital Archive

While eight years ago, the then Pascagoula Public Library's Genealogy and Local History Department was using a scanner-capable copier and a desktop, we have grown to using a state of the art scanner, photo editing software, and a digital asset manager. Through grant money and partnering with our local historical and genealogical society, the Singing River Library was able to acquire an Epson Expression 11000XL scanner. This scanner

has been approved to meet digitization standards by the Mississippi Digital Library. The library uses Adobe Photoshop to edit the scans and provide better readability, and even restoring damaged materials. Through open source software such as Omeka, Singing River has built a website that hosts their digital objects and exhibits them in ethically crafted displays.

We have come a long way from the three shelves of books that we started out with. But it has not been without hard work, good staff, and careful planning. We are devoted to telling the stories that have been entrusted to us, and digitization is a powerful tool to do this with.

Promoting the institution is good, promoting your community is better.

So, go pull out those boxes and empty out the bags, and tell your patrons' stories. Scan those materials and unearth the tales that have been hidden for so long. You have gems buried and it is time to let them shine.

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The Singing River Genealogy-Local History Library is located in Pascagoula, Jackson County, Mississippi. Singing River grew to its current entity over many decades of donations and dedication from the local community. They were

named a branch library by the Jackson-George Regional Library System board in early 2017.

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Resources
http://www.msdiglib.org
http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/
http://omeka.org/

Connecting on Campus
An Academic Writing Group Pilot

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Background
In September of 2015, I began working as the Science, Health, and Nursing Librarian for the University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Coast, on the Gulf Park campus. I previously worked on the main campus in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, from 2003 to 2011, and received tenure there. Now, I was starting over in the tenure process on a much smaller campus. While the university as a whole has 14, 479 students, the Gulf Coast campus only enrolls 3, 454 of those and out of 811 faculty, we have

134, with only 84 of those working full time. I quickly discovered that these smaller numbers meant less library instruction, fewer reference questions, and many empty seats when workshops were offered. In a profession were so much of our literature is practice-based, finding material to write about was going to be a challenge.

Soon, messages coming out on a university list-serv about a faculty writing group on the main campus caught my eye, but I had many questions. What exactly was a writing group? Was it something I could justify driving three hours (round trip) to and from the main campus for? Lastly, would I fit in to a group of non-librarian faculty? Not long after I noticed these messages, a librarian

from the main campus sent out an inquiry to find out if there would be any interest in a library writing group. Several librarians from the main campus wanted to give it a try, but those of us on the coast would have to participate via conference call. This led me to think, if I was going to be taking part in a writing group remotely, why limit it to Southern Miss? I knew our state had many successful writers and suspected that there might be people with similar interests to co-author with. I decided to send a survey questionnaire to the Mississippi Library Association list-serv.

Writing Group Survey
In November of 2015, I did a little research on the different ways

a writing group could look and function. Most of the time, writing groups appeared to be created based on the needs and wants of the members. Sarah Haas selected eleven dimensions to consider when creating a writing group: purpose, membership, leadership, contact type, time of day, place, frequency, length of meetings, duration of the group, in-meeting activities, and between meeting activities (Haas, 2014). I modified some of these based on our online format and I sent eight questions to the Mississippi Library Association list-serv, with space for comments and a space to volunteer to lead a session or be a guest speaker, and received 29 responses.


What do you hope to get out of a writing group?

When asked what they hoped to get out of a writing group, the majority of respondents said they wanted feedback and ideas for writing. Right under that, was advice about writing with accountability for getting writing completed next. Two respondents were interested in potential co-authors and one respondent was interested in using a writing group for networking while another was hoping for step-by-step help with taking an idea and making it a publishable article.

When asked what approach they would prefer in a writing group, most respondents wanted structured assignments with deadlines. The second choice was to focus on

What approach would you prefer in a writing group?

writing already in progress and next was to just have unstructured interactions in between meetings. One person indicated they would like all of the above.

What would be the ideal length of time for a writing group?
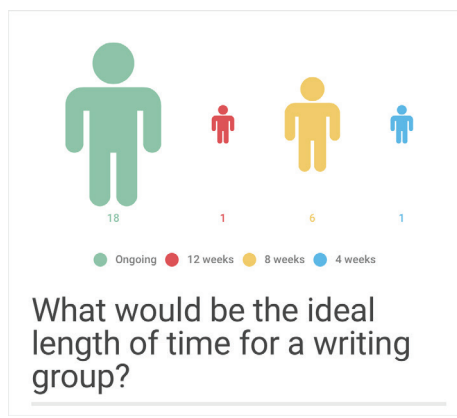
When asked what the ideal length of time for a writing group would be, most respondents preferred for it to be ongoing. Six respondents thought two months was a good time period and only one person liked the idea of one month and one

What would be the ideal time of year for you to participate in a writing group?
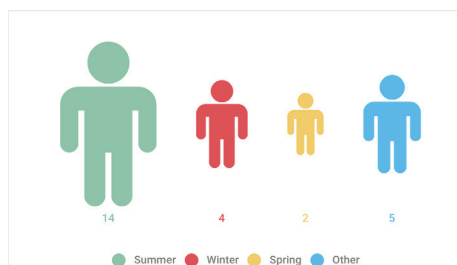
person selected three months.

When asked what time of year would be best for a writing group, summer received the majority of the responses. Next was winter, then spring, and then three commented that year-round would be preferable while another respondent indicated they were flexible and one respondent said, "slowest time for libraries."

How often do you think a writing group should meet?

When asked how often they thought a writing group should meet, most respondents selected once a month. Right under that was twice a month. Four respondents thought it should meet once a week while one respondent said quarterly and another thought two times a year.

What would you prefer to use for online meetings?
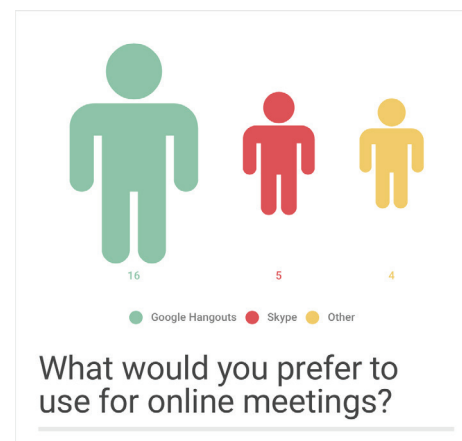
When asked what they would prefer for online meetings, most respondents chose Google Hangouts. Five respondents chose Skype and one respondent suggested Oovoo,

one suggested email, and two indicated they had no preference.

What would you prefer to use as an online forum?
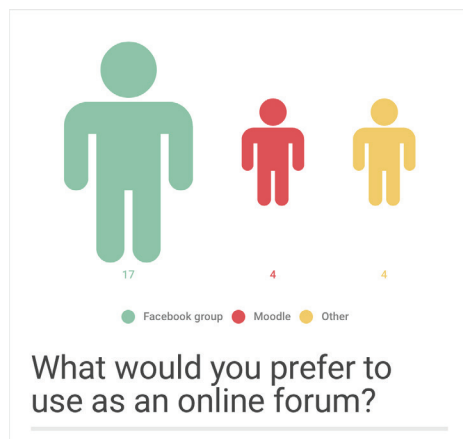
When asked what they would prefer as a forum for online discussion, most respondents selected a Facebook group. Four selected Moodle and one said email, another said a Google doc, another suggested Evernote, and one respondent indicated they just didn't know enough about it to answer.

How would you prefer to share documents in a writing group?
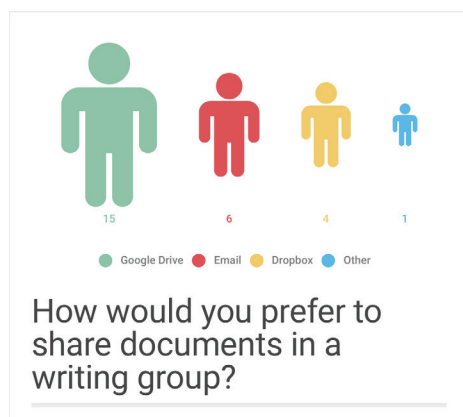
When asked how they would prefer to share documents in the writing group, most chose Google drive. Next was email, then Dropbox, and one respondent suggested all of the above.

Comments

While some respondents indicated they had never been part of a writing group, three indicated they had experience and would be willing to give advice and even help facilitate the writing group. What I did not anticipate was that many librarians interested in this venture were not academic librarians. There was interest expressed in using a writing group for creative writing and one respondent was actually a published children's author who offered to share her knowledge. One respondent felt this would be a great way to network and get to know other librarians in the state.

Writing Group Pilot

Plan A

My intention to start an online writing group was derailed by the holidays and by work projects in my second semester at my new job. I was still interested in starting a writing group but it moved to the back burner. So, in the spring of 2017, when the Director of Faculty Development, Gulf Park, contacted me about partnering to pilot an academic writing group on campus that summer, I was definitely interested. We agreed to hold the meetings in the library and the Vice Provost, Gulf Park, agreed to fund materials for the group.

In looking at research, we decided to go with the structured and guided model (Olszewska & Lock, 2016.) This model was based on the book *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A guide to Academic Publishing Success* by Wendy Laura Belcher (Belcher, 2009.) The book provides an activity for each of the twelve chapters and seemed like the ideal resource for a summer pilot.

The Director of Faculty Development, Gulf Park, had a doctoral degree in Education Psychology and decided she would like each writing group participant to have a consultation with her about their goals. We also decided to have guest speakers, such as subject liaison librarians and grant writers, based on participant needs. Lastly, we would have an open time period during the week where I would unlock the meeting room and participants could use this as a "writer's lounge."

All of this was decided without knowing who our participants would be and what their needs might be. We sent out a short survey to the Gulf Park faculty list-serv as a call for participants. Beyond their basic contact information, we asked if they had ever participated in a writing group, what aspects of a writing group they thought would be the most beneficial, and if they would like to attend via Skype. The survey also asked for the days and times they would most likely be able to meet over the summer and how often they thought the group should meet.

We received several inquiries about the group from faculty that did not fill out the survey. For survey respondents, we received two faculty members from University Libraries, one faculty member from History, one faculty member from Psychology, one faculty member from Geography, and one faculty member from Marine Science. The respondents included tenured and non-tenured faculty members.

Plan B

As we made plans to kick off the writing group, the Director of Faculty Development, Gulf Park, discovered that her job not continue after the end of June. In light of this unexpected news, she asked me to be the coordinator for the writing

group.

Our next surprise came in the form of who actually showed up to the writing group. Only three of the respondents attended (History, Geography, and University Libraries), which would make our group comprised of five members. This was concerning to me until I reviewed the literature again. I found the most effective groups had 3 to 6 members (Sullivan, 2013, Wardale et al., 2015, Tysick & Babb, 2006.) and that larger groups often broke down into smaller subgroups (Johnson, Roitman, Morgan & MacLeod, 2017.)

Once we met as a group, the participants immediately threw out our plan for a structured, guided model. They liked many things about the book we chose, one participant made plans to use it with his graduate students, but they did not want to complete the activities in the book themselves. It was also pointed out that in the introduction the author says the workbook is most useful to the humanities and social sciences and may not be of use to the sciences.

They also did not want guest speakers or the writer's lounge. What they did want was to use our meeting time to discuss writing that had been submitted to the group for review. We had moved to a group that would be unguided, but it still needed some type of structure. We had to lay some ground rules and make some decisions about how things would work.

Laying the Foundation

The first thing we did was have everyone submit their goals. The literature on writing groups consistently states that this is the most important part of a successful group. By setting specific, narrow goals and timelines, this increases accountability and increases the likelihood that something will be produced during the time of the writing group (Gandy, 2015.)

Then, we had to make decisions about technology. How would we communicate and share our work? We decided that we would continue to communicate outside of our meetings through email. Our university provided a subscription to Microsoft Office 365, which includes the cloud drive OneDrive. No separate account would need to be created. We decided that we would create a shared folder and upload our documents for review to this folder.

Next, we had to make a decision about our timeline. This pilot would only take place during the summer, so we realized we had to meet weekly. This turned out to be a popular meeting frequency in successful writing groups. In fact, in Olszewska and Lock's study, one writing group moved to every two weeks and returned to weekly when they found it helped keep them on track with their writing goals and in managing their time to write (2016, p.137). In order to review writing before our weekly meetings, we decided that work should be uploaded by midnight the Sunday after each meeting.

We wanted to make sure each member got what they needed out of reviews from other group members, so we decided that each submitted work would have a memo attached detailing what the author did and did not want. What did they want the reviewers to look for?

What did they need help with? We also created some general guidelines for the members to always follow when commenting on other members' papers: make your comments directly on the shared comment with your initials by midnight before the meeting, stick to the memo requests, and no rewrites or disrespectful comments.

Challenges

As expected, time was the biggest challenge for the group. Even though it was summer, our Geography professor was teaching an online class and often ran late to our meetings. For all of us, it was difficult to find time not only to meet, but to write and to review the work from other members. Even though our meetings were only one hour, they resulted in several hours a week outside of the meetings.

Vulnerability was another challenge for group members. From the start, it was decided that each group member must continue to write in order to participate, thus exposing all of us equally. Many articles point out the need for trust within the group for it to be successful. Members must be able to feel safe in the writing group environment (Wardale et al., 2015). For me, as a librarian, I felt insecure allowing teaching faculty to read my work and our History professor expressed insecurities about letting us read unfinished chapters. For all of us, we were commenting outside of our discipline and taking a chance that we may not understand something or an accepted way of writing for that discipline.

Benefits

One of the unexpected benefits was the presence of peer pressure. In order to prove our worthiness to be in the group and because we were a small group, there was pressure to write and to review each other's work by the deadlines each week. This also increased our accountability. Jennifer Howard refers to this in her *Chronicle of Higher Education* article as, "the power of shame." (Howard, 2015.)

Exposure to other disciplines was also a benefit to our writing group. Our Geography professor was able to identify journals to submit a paper about a historical hurricane to thanks to feedback from our History professor. Often, feedback was even more useful because group members did not have prior knowledge on a topic and were not able to make assumptions. I received valuable feedback on chapters I was working on about open educational resources for an open textbook and our Director of Faculty Development was able to revise an introduction she was writing for an active learning textbook based on questions from group members about her submitted writing.

It was also beneficial for me, as a librarian, to see how other disciplines write. In Helen Sword's *Stylish Academic Writing*, she actually creates a chart in Chapter 2 that graphs the use of elements such as personal pronouns and engaging titles by discipline. In the same chapter, she also graphs number of authors, pages and citations by discipline. She uses these data to encourage writers to step outside of common practices in their discipline. For me, viewing different ways of writing definitely opened up possibilities in my practice.

Another interesting byproduct of our writing group was that many times, our discussions went off topic. It was extremely useful to hear about how other members selected topics, what their writing and research process was, and even what their teaching process was and what their experiences with students, and of views of students, were. Tysick and Babb discovered this was the case with other writing groups as well and referred to them as a "laboratory" for knowledge (2006, p.96.)

Lastly, as a librarian, I felt a great benefit of this pilot was that it lowered my feelings of intimidation about writing. Seeing drafts from other faculty let me see that they were not natural, "super star" writers. Discussing barriers let me realize that I was not alone in trying to find time to write. And participating in the group let me feel connected to other faculty in a way that I had not previously. In our group, we truly became peers, and I was viewed as an equal instead of someone just there to support their research and support the needs of their students.

Future Plans

At the end of the summer, we departed into the fall semester with the hope that we could find time to continue to meet. For this reason, I did not assess the pilot at that time. While we have not continued to meet, our Vice Provost has expressed an interest in trying this again during summer 2018. Her interest stems from the fact that new faculty can often feel isolated and this is even more the case at a dual campus university. Much of the literature suggests that writing groups can increase faculty retention by making members feel connected and supported.

Before going into another summer writing group, I would like to send a questionnaire to the participants of the writing group and find out what their experience was. I would also like to survey those that expressed interest and then did not attend. What were their barriers to participating? What could we do to lower (or do away with) those challenges?

And, eventually, I think it would be wonderful to take the interest that was expressed in an online writing group by librarians in Mississippi and connect with others across the state. Would the benefits transfer to an online environment? I would love to see what we could learn from each other and about the process.

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SLIS Notes

Teresa S. Welsh

Professor and Director
School of Library and Information Science
(SLIS), University of Southern Mississippi

Greetings, dear scholars. The big news for SLIS is that we are preparing for re-accreditation by the American Library Association in spring 2019. This rigorous process begins at least one year prior to the reaccreditation date and we are now working on the self-study plan. The self-study, due in October, is organized into five main sections according to the *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* (ALA, 2015):

I. Systematic Planning

II. Curriculum

III. Faculty

IV. Students

V. Administration, Finances, and Resources.

Detailed requirements for each section are available online at http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/sites/ala.org.educationcareers/files/content/standards/Standards_2015_adopted_02-02-15.pdf.

Southern Miss SLIS is the only ALA-accredited program in Mississippi - continuously accredited since 1979 - and is one of only fifty ALA-accredited programs in the U.S. Since SLIS offers a MLIS with school library licensure emphasis, we are also accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and the University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Annual program assessment data (WEAVE reports) may be viewed at http://www.usm.edu/library-information-science/program-assessment.

As part of program assessment, SLIS periodically reviews the curriculum to check for coverage of *ALA's Core Competencies of Librarianship* (2009), which "defines the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies" (http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences).

1. Foundations of the Profession

2. Information Resources

3. Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information

4. Technological Knowledge and Skills

5. Reference and User Services

6. Research

7. Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning

8. Administration and Management.

Technology Knowledge and Skills

ALA professional competencies, which we address in the MLIS course goals and assignments, increased the emphasis on technical knowledge and skills in recent years. To address this, SLIS requires both undergraduates and graduate students to take at least one pure technology course: LIS 416/516: Technology in the School Library for licensure students; LIS 457/557: Information Technology and Libraries, a general technology and online applications course; or LIS 458/558: Web Design and Evaluation, which includes learning basic HTML and how to design, create, and evaluate webpages.

LIS students are required to design and create an e-portfolio with their image and professional information, online resume, and links to selected class papers and multimedia projects.

SLIS faculty are also required to have a teaching e-portfolio with image, teaching philosophy, updated CV, and either syllabi or information on classes we teach. You can view faculty e-portfolios on the SLIS website – http://www.usm.edu/library-information-science/faculty-and-staff.

Would you like to create an e-portfolio? Here are some useful

free websites:

http://www.portfoliogen.com for teachers, students, and professionals

http://www.wix.com has an e-portfolio template – you can view mine as an http://teresawelsh.wix-site.com/portfolio

What should one include in a professional librarian e-portfolio?

On the home page, include an image of yourself (perhaps one of you in your library) with your name and professional title, library name linked to library website, your philosophy or a relevant quote

Link to updated resume (but with no personal address or phone number) saved in pdf format

Links to publications, presentations, articles that mention you or your library

Links to digital creations such as blog, glog, pinterest, YouTube video, etc.

Links to professional social media sites

Create a webliography of useful library-related and/or educational websites

Gallery of images of your library, particularly of you in the library (avoid using images of patrons unless you have their permission; particularly avoid using images of children unless you have parents' permission), and images of you at a professional conference, event, or activity.

Useful Free Websites

Ten Useful Websites for Techie Librarians http://inalj.com/?p=10038

29 Incredibly Useful Websites from LifeHack http://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/30-incredibly-useful-web-sites-you-wish-you-knew-earlier.html

Best Online Research Resources by Open Education Database http://oedb.org/ilibrarian/best-online-research-sites/

Best Websites for Teaching & Learning by ALA/AASL http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards/best/websites/2017

How to Find and Evaluate Free Online Resources (http://www.slideshare.net/drtwelsh/welsh-olli14is) a presentation for retirees at OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute).

Library Conferences of Interest

American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference & Exhibition, New Orleans, LA, June 21 - 26. Look for the SLIS table in the Exhibit Hall and pick up some USM and SLIS handouts and giveaways. http://2018.alaannual.org

Archives and Records, Washington, D.C., August 12 - 18. http://www2.archivists.org/am2018

Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC) sponsored by the American Indian Library Association (AILA), Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and REFORMA, September 26 - 30, Albuquerque, N.M. http://www.jclcinc.org/

SLIS Program Information

If interested in:

Bachelor of Science in LIS online, contact johnnie.pace@usm.edu

MLIS online degree program, contact teresa.welsh@usm.edu

MLIS degree program with school licensure emphasis, contact c.bomhold@usm.edu

Graduate Certificate in Archives and Special Collections, which may be earned with or post-MLIS, contact matthew.griffis@usm.edu

Graduate Certificate in Youth Services and Literature, which may be earned with or post-MLIS, contact stacy.creel@usm.edu

British Studies LIS class each June in London, contact christopher.a.cunningham@usm.edu

Visit http://www.usm.edu/slis for additional information, email slis@usm.edu or call 601.266.4228.

SLIS Needs You!

Distinguished SLIS graduates – you can help us prepare for ALA accreditation by sending us your professional title, workplace, and preferred email address for our alum listserv. SLIS produces professional librarians, archivists, and information specialists, and the ALA Committee on Accreditation wants to know where our graduates are working and their professional title and accomplishments. Additionally, we may seek input from both graduates and those who hire our graduates via online survey or focus group request sent through MLA and SLIS listservs.

News Briefs

Carol Green
Serials Librarian
University of Southern Mississippi

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI NEW COLLABORATIVE EXHIBIT

The University of Mississippi Libraries' Department of Archives & Special Collections and the University of Mississippi Museum are pleased to announce the opening of the new collaborative exhibition, "'No Two Alike": A Special Collections and University Museum Exhibition. The year-long display located in the Department of Archives & Special Collections (3rd floor of the JD Williams Library), features artwork, archival resources and ephemera related to art and artists, both from Mississippi and elsewhere. The Museum contributed a number of original pieces from their collection, including: Theora Hamblett paintings; sculptures from James "Son Ford" Thomas; John McCrady paintings; George Ohr pottery; and much more. Special Collections has showcased a number of archival pieces from its rare book collection, Faulkner and Welty collections, visual collections, blues archive, etc.

Submitted by
Jennifer Ford
Head of Special Collections
University of Mississippi

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LAFAYETTE COUNTY & OXFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY ONLINE JOB ASSISTANCE

The Lafayette County & Oxford Public Library in Oxford, MS has partnered with Families First of North Mississippi to provide online job assistance including online applications, resumes, and setting up email addresses. We noticed that many of our patrons needed so much help with this and as a busy branch we did not feel we could always have enough time to help. Families First provides us with a volunteer once a week to do just that. The program began January 22nd and has been very successful so far. The word is out and patrons have begun to show up at the appointed time. This was much needed in our community and we are very excited to be able to offer this.

Submitted by
Laura Beth Walker
Head Librarian
Lafayette County & Oxford Public Library

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MISSISSIPPI YOUNG ADULT AUTHOR VISITS MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mississippi Young Adult Author, Angie Thomas, visited the Madison Public Library for a signing of her debut novel, *The Hate U Give*. Prior to the signing, Angie Thomas spoke, to a packed room, about the art of writing and offered words of advice and encouragement to writers. Angie Thomas also shared stories from her personal life and how they shaped her as a writer and led her to write *The Hate U Give*. Patrons in attendance were able to ask questions about what it takes to be a writer as well as questions about her work, including her upcoming novel, On the Come Up. See what Angie Thomas had to say in this video about Madison County Library. https://www.facebook.com/MCLSlibraries/videos/2238180382864515/

Submitted by
Braley Reed
Assistant Systems Administrator
Madison County Library System

Text us and stay updated at the Madison County Library System!

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WEST JONES MIDDLE/ HIGH SCHOOL GETS NEW RESOURCES

Howard Industries, Inc./Howard Technology Solutions donated 30 laptop computers, a printer, a cart, 2 tablets, and over 100 new books to West Jones Middle/High School. The books are titles requested by students, and the tablets will be filled with ebooks and audio books. The 30 laptops + printer+ cart will become a mobile lab for all West Jones teachers to utilize as needed. The students and faculty are very thankful for the generosity of Howard Industries, Inc./Howard Technology Solutions.

Submitted by
Rhonda C. Perkins, NBCT

Media Center Specialist
West Jones High School

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RICHARD GRANT VISITS BRANDON HIGH SCHOOL

Richard Grant, author of *Dispatches from Pluto*, visited Brandon High School Comp students in January. Teachers Jessica Bartling, Lady Baker and Nicole Faulkner required research of social issues addressed in Grant's book which is based in the Mississippi Delta area.

Submitted by
Susan Lott
Librarian
Brandon High School

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BUYS DONATES WWII LETTERS TO MSU LIBRARIES

Mississippi State University Libraries' Special Collections is pleased to announce the donation of the Luther and Fannye Rhodes WWII Letters Collection from the Buys family.

The Luther and Fannye Rhodes WWII Letters Collection, donated by Rhodes' grandson Dr. David Buys of the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion on behalf of the extended Rhodes family, is composed of over 100 letters written by Luther Rhodes to his wife during World War II. The letters, which date from approximately 1943 to 1949, encompass Rhodes' military experience, including his time in Burma and North Africa.

When asked why Buys thought this was the right time to donate the collection to the MSU Libraries he said, "No one in our family as served in the military since granddaddy did in WWII until very recently when three of his great-grandchildren whom he never met have joined the Marines. Given the military significance of this collection, it only seemed right to move forward with this donation in memory of grandmother and granddaddy and in honor of the newest generation in our family who will serve our country well- Private First Class Coltan Wofford, Marine Recruit Austin Davis and Marine Recruit Brady Davis."

This collection expands and compliments the Libraries' existing holdings of World War II letters, which include the Stewart "Bebe" Bridgforth Collection and the Ottis Ballard and Jessie Dola Stephenson Collection. These three collections are notable because they contain letters from a soldier at the front as well as from family at home. Bridgforth served as an officer in Germany and France, while Ballard was an in the infantry in Africa and Italy, and Rhodes, a former telephone company employee, worked to set up infrastructure to support troop movements.

During the ceremony accepting the papers, Jennifer McGillan, Coordinator of Manuscripts, said, "We are very pleased to accept these papers and to add them to our growing collection of military related collections preserved in the MSU Libraries." She added "these papers will be used many students and researchers for years to come."

The collection will be available to the public when it has been fully processed. For more information, please contact Special Collections http://lib.msstate.edu/specialcollections.

Submitted by
Jennifer McGillan
Coordinator of Manuscripts
Mississippi State University Libraries

People in the News

Carol Green
Serials Librarian
University of Southern Mississippi

Maryanne Anthony was presented with The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) University Libraries Staff Excellence Award in December 2017. Ms. Anthony has worked at Gunter Library (Gulf Coast Research Laboratory) as Library Assistant since September 2013. She is currently enrolled at Southern Miss in the BLIS program. She serves as chair of the USM Staff Council Scholarship Committee. Maryanne and her husband Tony own a small organic farm and raise alpacas in the Big Level community of Stone County. She teaches knitting at the Ocean Springs Municipal Library.

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Elizabeth La Beaud started as the new Assistant Director for the Mississippi Digital Library (MDL) in January 2018. She is the Digital Lab Manager for the University of Southern Mississippi and holds a MLIS, certificate in Archives and Special Collections, the Digital Archives Specialist certificate from SAA, and is a Library of Congress trained Digital Preservation Topical Trainer. AS MDL's Assistant Director, her duties will include helping to recruit new partner institutions, training institutions in digitization and related topics, and managing MDL's technology stack.

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Carla Fulgham, Library Assistant at the Lafayette County & Oxford Public Library (a branch of First Regional Library), has been selected to present her paper *Hashtags and Instalove: A Webometric Analysis of Academic Special Collections on Instagram* at the international Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries (QQML) Conference this May in Chania, Crete.

Her research will use quantitative methods to analyze strategies for academic special collections on Instagram, including popular hashtags, and frequency and type of posts. Instagram's emphasis on visual content and its appeal to a young, diverse demographic make it an excellent platform for special collections to engage university students in rare books and other attractive collections. This research will contribute to best standards for academic special collections using, or interested in using, Instagram as a social media platform.

Carla will graduate this May from the University of Southern Mississippi with an MLIS and a certification in archives and special collections.

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The Bolivar County Library System is pleased to recognize two individuals for their dedication and support of the Rosedale Public Library and the Bolivar County Library System.

Rebecca "Becky" Lewis, the Bolivar County Library Board member from District 1, was instrumental in spearheading the much-needed renovation of the Rosedale Public Library. On February 6, 2018, the Rosedale City Council presented Ms. Lewis with a resolution of appreciation for her volunteer service to the Rosedale Public Library. Ms. Lewis has served on the Library Board for 9 years.

Photograph by Jennifer Wann
Rebecca Lewis with Rosedale Vice Mayor Tracy Robinson

Joyce Applegate was the beloved librarian at the Rosedale Public Library for 20 years from 1986-2006 and has remained a staunch supporter of the library ever since. At the Open House celebrating the completion of renovations at the library held on January 26, 2018, the meeting room at the library was renamed the "Joyce Applegate Room" in her honor.

Photograph by Tamara Blackwell
Left to right – Rosedale Librarian Martha Lawson, BCLS Director Jennifer Wann and Joyce Applegate

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Brandi Katterjohn, a library assistant at the M.R. Davis Public Library, a branch of First Regional Library, received her M.L.S. in December 2017. Brandi focused on academic libraries and is very interested in working in an academic setting.

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Jim Thompson is the Director of Library Services for Holmes Community College. He is a proponent of new technologies and diverse services within libraries and teaches technology outreach classes to the community. He is Vice President of the Holmes County Chamber of Commerce and is currently writing a book about career exploration with shadowing opportunities in early academic careers.

http://Linkedin.com/in/james-thompson-67abba52

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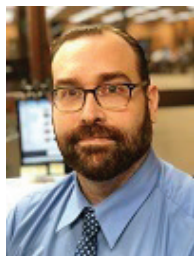
New hires at Mississippi State University:

Jenifer Ishee Hoffman joined Mississippi State University Library in August as an Assistant Professor/Coordinator of the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Format Review. Ms. Hoffman is a native of Mobile, Alabama, and has worked for the past 20 years in public service as well as private law firms in Mobile, Hartford, and Washington, D.C. Her extensive background formatting documents in the legal field led her to this position where she will be assisting graduate students in the formatting of their final papers. Prior to joining MSU, Ms. Hoffman served as a supervisor in the Judicial Division of the Mobile County Probate Court, assisting the Judge of Probate with the deceased estates and involuntary commitment dockets. Ms. Hoffman earned her B.S. in Paralegal Studies from the University of Southern Mississippi, an M.A. in History from the University of Nebraska, where she concentrated her studies on early American and British Reform periods, and an MLIS from Kent State University with a focus on Special Collections.

Paul L. Weaver has joined the Mississippi State University Libraries as Assistant Professor / Continuing Resources Librarian. This position focuses on the management of the print serials collection. Paul previously served as Research Librarian at Bluffton University in Ohio, where his work included reference, government documents, serials and instruction. Paul received his MSLS in library science from the University of Kentucky and his undergraduate degree in Communication Arts from Malone College.

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New hires at University of Mississippi:

Alan Munshower joined the faculty of the University of Mississippi Libraries, as a Special Collections Librarian (Audio and Visual), in September 2017. Alan graduated from the University of Maryland in 2014, receiving his MLS with a specialization in Archives, Records and Information Management. He also holds a BA in Music from Goucher College. He has worked on projects at Maryland's Performing Arts Special Collections, University of Baltimore's film archive, Special Collections at the Loyola Notre Dame Library in Baltimore, and at the J.P. Webster Library in West Hartford, CT. His research interests include American music, digital file distribution models, and copyright. Alan's hobbies include playing music, hiking in the mountains, and growing his personal collection of over 2500 unpublished recordings.

Cassie Swayze joined the staff of the University of Mississippi Libraries in February as the Digital Assets Librarian and Assistant Professor. She received her MLS from the University of North Texas in 2017 with an emphasis in archival management, digital curation and data management. Cassie is a third generation Texan and most recently worked for the University of Texas at Austin. She also has more than a decade of experience in the fine arts and collections management, and maintains an interest in emerging opportunities in the digital humanities.

MSU Opens Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library and the Frank and Virginia Williams Lincolniana Gallery

Stephen Cunetto
Associate Dean
Mississippi State University Libraries

On November 30, 2017, Mississippi State University (MSU) and the MSU Libraries held the Grand Opening of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. The completion of the 21,000 square foot addition to MSU's Mitchell Memorial Library was commemorated through a Grand Opening Ceremony that brought approximately 600 people to the Library. The new facility includes two museums, an auditorium, a researcher reading room, staff offices, cold storage facility, processing room and a conference room. The construction of the facility cost approximately $8.3 million and was funded through the Mississippi Legislature. The development, design and fabrication of the museums cost approximately $2.7 million.

The cornerstone of the new facility is the two museums – the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library Museum and the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana Gallery that provides visitors with an opportunity to learn more about the life and times of two United States Presidents – Ulysses S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln.

Visitors to the Grant Museum will learn about his time as a young cadet at West Point to his life during the Civil War and his time as the 18th President of the United States. Visitors will learn about Grant's world tour following his presidency and the significance and impact it had on the United States. Finally, visitors will learn more about the writing of his memoirs and funeral procession through an interactive display that allows visitors to digitally explore photos from the *Seven Mile Funeral Cortege of General Grant*. The internationally known Studio Eis created four life-size statues of Grant representing him at four different stages of his life. Iconic pictures from the archive were used to create the life-like statues which have become a favorite of visitors to the Museum. As with any museum, there are far more materials and stories to tell than space exists in the Museum. To maximize the number of stories told through the Museum, the Libraries include interactive displays that chronicle Grant's life through images from the digital archives and include interviews with leading Grant authorities John F. Marszalek, Ron White, and Joan Waugh.

The Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana Gallery represents materials from a vast Abraham Lincoln collection donated to MSU in 2017 by former Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. Approximately 100 of the nearly 30,000 items from the Collection are on display in the Gallery. Williams assisted with the development of the Gallery and the exhibit lending his knowledge of the Collection, the artifacts and Lincoln's life. In addition to learning about the specific pieces, visitors will learn about Williams and why he collected many of the pieces.

The Grand Opening of the Presidential Library was preceded by the inaugural Frank and Virginia Williams Lecture on Abraham Lincoln and Civil War Studies. The keynote speaker, Harold Holzer, renowned Lincoln scholar and Director of the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College, gave a presentation titled "The General vs. the President: Lincoln, Grant and the Battle for Civil War Memory." The presentation focused on the iconography of Grant's and Lincoln's images during and after the Civil War.

MSU lined up an impressive list of speakers to commemorate the Grand Opening of the U. S. Grant Presidential Library and the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana Gallery. MSU President, Dr. Mark E. Keenum, eloquently talked about the significance of the Grant Presidential Library being in Mississippi and at MSU noting that "no other state in the Nation had more to do with propelling Grant's career than Mississippi." Keenum went on to say that "having both the Grant Collection and the Williams Collection makes MSU and the Grant Presidential Library a

national center for the study of the American Civil War."

Governor Phil Bryant was among several guest speakers who talked about the Grant and Williams Collections and the impact they will have on Mississippi. Bryant expressed his gratitude to the Grant Association and the Williams' for making MSU and Mississippi the home of these extraordinary collections. He went on to say that he fully expected the new Presidential Library and the Williams Collection to have a positive impact on Mississippi tourism.

During Congressman Gregg Harper's remarks, the Congressman announced that he and his wife, Sydney, will be donating his Congressional collection to the MSU Libraries' Congressional and Political Research Center which is housed in the new facility. Since Harper took office, Frances Coleman, Dean of Libraries, has been asking Harper to commit to placing his Papers at MSU. Harper and Coleman both noted that this was the perfect opportunity to announce that his Papers will reside at MSU. Harper was instrumental in bringing two special guest speakers to the Grand Opening – the Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero and the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden. Both Ferriero and Hayden spoke of the significance of the Collections and the importance of them being in Mississippi and at Mississippi State University. Ferriero welcomed the U. S. Grant Presidential Library into the group of Presidential Libraries and thanked Dr. Keenum for supporting the development of the Grant Presidential Library noting that no effort like

this happens without the support of the President of the University.

The 14th Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, said that Dr. Keenum made a librarian's heart sing when he told the crowd that he had worked hard during the economically difficult times to preserve the library budget and keeping it whole. She went on to say that the opening of the museums was a momentous occasion! Since taking office, she said she has had many "pinch me moments" when viewing some of the Library of Congress' documents. During her tour of the museums she said she had several "pinch me moments" and fully expected visitors to have similar moments. She added that the treasures and the use of technology in the museums showcase the holdings in a way that you can't imagine. She and Ferriero pledged that MSU will have the full resources and service of the Library of Congress as a partner to expand the resources and programming available to the Libraries. Hayden closed by commenting on Lincoln and Grant's quest to find peace and the continuous dialogue we have had since the war adding "…the knowledge housed in this Library and this University can only add to that conversation as we continue to wrestle with our past but Ulysses S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln have been embraced in Mississippi in 2017 is a fitting legacy to the men who appealed to the better angels of our nature in the quest to let us have peace."

Frank J. Williams spoke as President of the U. S. Grant Association and as the donor of the Williams Collection. He thanked the University and the Libraries for accepting

and embracing the collections. He noted that he and Virginia felt comfortable with donating their collection to MSU after working with the Libraries for over nine years when the Grant Association moved to Mississippi. He relayed the story of how the Grant Collection came to MSU through a deal made through one telephone conversation between Williams and Coleman. Through that effort with MSU, he and Virginia knew that MSU was the right place and it was the right time to make this donation. Williams closed by first quoting from Lincoln's 1862 Annual Message to Congress, "We can succeed only by concert. It is not "can any of us imagine better?" but, "can we all do better?". Williams went on to say that "with these galleries and the collections that support them and the wonderful staff that serve them and the people that use them, we have in a significant way done better."

Dr. John F. Marszalek, Executive Director of the U. S. Grant Association, and Frances Coleman, Dean of the MSU Libraries concluded the ceremony by thanking the countless number of individuals who assisted in every phase of the project. Both noted how pleased they were and expressed their sincere gratitude to those who assisted in the development of the new facility.

The Presidential Library is open to visitors Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. For more information visit the Grant Association at http://usgrantlibrary.org and the Williams Collection at http://library.msstate.edu/williamscollection
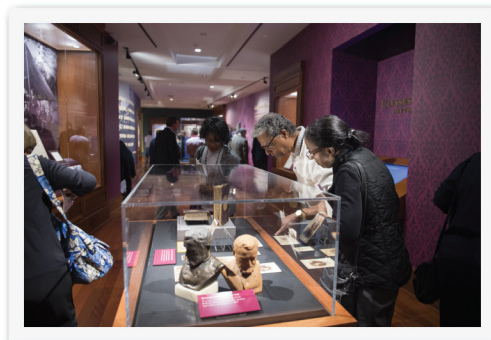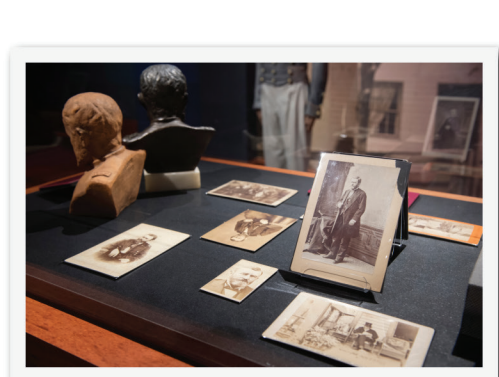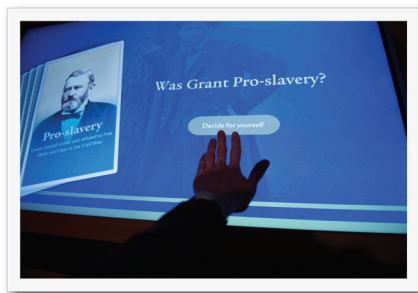
Page 21 captions, left to right, top to bottom:

Dr. Mark E. Keenum, President, Mississippi State University, speaking during the Grant Opening Ceremony.

Phil Bryant, Governor of the State of Missisippi, speaking during the Grant Opening Ceremony.

Gregg Harper, Congressman, U. S. Representatives for Mississippi's 3rd Congressional District, speaking during the Grant Opening Ceremony.

David Ferriero, Archivist of the United States speaking during the Grant Opening Ceremony.

Left to right: Gregg Harper; Frances Coleman, Dean of Libraries; Dr. Mark Keenum; Frank J. Williams, donor and President of the U. S. Grant Association; Gov. Phil Bryant; Viginia Wiliams, donor, George Buss, Lincoln impersonator

Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress speaking during the Grant Opening Ceremony.

Attendees to the grand opening ceremony located on the 4th floor of Mitchell Library

Page 22 captions, left to right, top to bottom:

Interactive display developed to allow visitors to learn more about Grant and to explore the myths associated with his life and career

Life-size statue of U. S. Grant as President. Created by Studio Eis, Brooklyn, NY

Life-size statue of U. S. Grant as General. Created by Studio Eis, Brooklyn, NY

Visitors exploring the Grant Museum following the opening ceremony

Dr. Carla Hayden touring the Wiliams Gallery

Artifacts on display in the Grant Museum

Virginia and Frank J. Williams, donors of the Frank & Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana

Visitors touring the Willams Gallery following the opening ceremony

Visitors touring the Willams Gallery following the opening ceremony

Visitors exploring the Grant Museum following the opening ceremony

Book Reviews

Michele Frasier-Robinson
*Librarian for
Education & Psychology
University of Southern Mississippi*

Bush, Robert D., ed.
Surveying the Early Republic: The Journal of Andrew Ellicott, U.S. Boundary Commissioner in the Old Southwest 1796-1800.
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016. 270pp. $48.00 (hardcover)

Do you hate travel delays? You may have experienced them because of weather or mechanical problems with your transportation, but they would pale in comparison with Andrew Ellicott's experience. Due to his reputation as a seasoned city planner and surveyor, the revolutionary war veteran was commissioned by President George Washington to survey and set the official boundaries between the United States and Spain in the Old Southwest (Mississippi, Alabama, Florida Panhandle) in the late 1790s. However, he and his contingent were continuously delayed and threatened with violence by Spanish officials who refused to accept the terms of the Treaty of San Lorenzo.

Ellicott's journal details the flora and fauna he encountered on his travels, the hardships he endured, and the people he met along the

way, including representatives from the Spanish government who were increasingly hostile toward his official duty of solidifying a boundary between their territory and the United States. Not only did Ellicott record his day-to-day observations, he provided the text of letters he received from people he corresponded with during his travels, including the governor of the Natchez District for Spain, Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, and the leader of his military escort, Lieutenant "Crazy" Percy Smith Pope. There are also several maps included that illustrate Ellicott's journey.

Editor Robert Bush's introduction includes helpful background information on Ellicott's journey, a chronology of events, and historical notes to provide context about the people and events Ellicott described. The appendix has an excerpt from a journal by Francis Bailey, a contemporary of Ellicott's who provides another voice describing this time period and some of the same events.

This is an excellent primary source for those who are interested in studying early America's Southwestern frontier and the political struggles between the United States and Spain during this time. *Surveying the Early Republic* is recommended for research libraries.

Maya Berry
Digital Librarian
Northwest Mississippi Community College

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Cox, Karen L.
Goat Castle: A True Story of Murder, Race, and the Gothic South.
Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017. 240 pp. $26.00 (hardcover)

A blend of history and true crime, Karen L. Cox's *Goat Castle: A True Story of Murder, Race, and the Gothic South* explores the then-famous 1932 murder of Natchez resident Jennie Merrill, a wealthy recluse. Two of Merrill's neighbors, Richard "Dick" Dana and Octavia Dockery – who lived with an assortment of goats, chickens, ducks, geese, and cats in a grimy decaying Antebellum mansion – convinced an African American man known as George Pearls to help them rob the woman with whom they had had a tense relationship for years. When the robbery took a wrong turn, Merrill was shot and killed. Pearls was himself shot and killed not long after the incident by a police deputy in Arkansas. As was typical of the Jim Crow South, Emily Burns, an African American woman who was in the wrong place at the wrong time, was the only person to stand trial and be sent to prison for the murder. Meanwhile, Dana and Dockery – descendants of the White planter class – ultimately profited from their involvement, as the press fixated on their eccentric behavior and unbelievable living conditions.

Goat Castle recounts in detail the murder investigation, Burns' trial, and the nationwide obsession with the case as well as the backstories of the individuals involved, including Jennie Merrill, Emily Burns, George Pearls, and the "Wild Man" and "Goat Lady," as Dana and Dockery were referred to at the time. What seems to make Cox's account of this 1930's murder unique is the fuller picture she provides of Emily Burns, a figure long overshadowed by the Faulkneresque Dana and Dockery, and how she situates the incident in

the context of the Jim Crow South as well as the Depression Era's nostalgia for a mythical Old South.

Although Cox, a historian, did a great deal of research for this book, her writing style is geared toward a general audience and she provides just the right amount of background information and historical context needed to follow the narrative as it progresses. *Goat Castle* is a fairly quick read, despite its close look at a curious historical murder, and includes supplemental material such as photographs, making it accessible to a wide variety of potential readers. This title is highly recommended for academic and public libraries, especially those with history buffs and true crime aficionados among their patrons.

Elena Azadbakht
Health and Nursing Librarian
University of Southern Mississippi

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Jackson, Linda Williams
Midnight Without a Moon.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. 320 pp. $16.99 (hardcover)

Fact and fiction are intertwined in this story set in rural Stillwater, Mississippi during the summer of 1955. The stifling heat, injustices and hopelessness African Americans experienced in the Jim Crow South resonate strongly in this story. Jackson expertly fashions a central character in Rose Lee Carter, a thirteen-year-old girl living on a cotton plantation with her sharecropping grandparents, brother and cousin. Rose's life is filled with plenty of hardships. She is abused and harshly criticized by her tyrannical

grandmother, Ma Pearl, who constantly berates her for her offensive dark skin color--"blacker than midnight without a moon."

Moreover, Rose is exasperated with the daily struggles of rural living. She dreams of a brighter future, going to college, and of one day joining her mother or a favorite aunt who both moved North in search of better lives. However, Rose's daily routine is abruptly interrupted by the murder of Emmett Till. The young man's death has a profound effect on Rose as she struggles to understand whether she should be a part of those who demand change or remain afraid to challenge the status quo. It is through her friendship with the local preacher's son, Hallelujah Jenkins, that Rose is able to understand the complexity of the segregated South and becomes conscious of her own sense of place.

Amidst horrible violence and historic change, this coming-of-age story is cleverly expressed with intriguing, complex characters, and a memorable authentic narrative. Jackson's work makes for a great read for middle grade students and adults, however, younger readers may have some difficulty in understanding the abundant Southern vernacular and Rose's endless, hopeless struggles.

Mantra Henderson, MLIS
Director of Library Services
Mississippi Valley State University

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McCall, Mike

Catfish Days: From Belzoni to the Big Apple.
Point Clear, Alabama: Pond Bank Publishing, 2016. 264 pp. $32.00 (hardcover)

Journalist Mike McCall, co-founder of the *Mississippi Business Journal* and editor of T*he Catfish Journal* for 25 years, has written an entertaining and thorough history of the catfish farming industry in the South. He chronicles the beginnings of what became big business with major players such as ConAgra, Coca Cola, and General Tire and Rubber as well as many small and family owned operations. As McCall writes, "In the second half of the twentieth century, frenzied investors, from city slickers to country folks, and others poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the southern United States to build catfish farms, feed mills, processing plants and infrastructure…Catfish made fortunes for some and sent others running for bankruptcy" (8).

It looked like the next Gold Rush or dot.com and had a similar fate. As large companies tried to get in on the boom, so did small farmers who were losing money on other crops. McCall describes in detail the efforts to convert farmland into ponds without much knowledge of the particular needs of catfish. Universities in Texas, Oklahoma and Mississippi began studies in catfish aquaculture, providing important research into the feeding, propagation and processing of fish. Farmers and investors in many Southern states began building the infrastructure required for the new industry – feed mills, hatcheries, and processing plants. Many disasters occurred for both large and small investors due to this lack of knowledge at the beginning. In addition, many fortunes were made and some lost as catfish farming boomed and then burst. Competition from foreign catfish farmers,

mostly Asian, played a huge role in the decline of the market in the early 2000s. It is now mainly a family owned industry with the need for succeeding generations to continue the business.

McCall provides many stories based on interviews with farmers, processers and workers. His personal involvement and knowledge of the people and land gives insight into the chaotic nature of the business. Some of the most interesting stories revolve around the need to create a market for catfish outside the South. He writes about catfish cookoffs in Washington D.C. to entice congressional support. He shares the stories of local restaurants in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi as well as major ad campaigns in *Newsweek*, *Time* and *Good Housekeeping*. He covers all aspects of the industry, including the many lawsuits and legal challenges it has faced.

Photographs, a chart of commercial catfish production from 2002 to 2016, a list of U. S. Catfish Processors and a list of presidents of the Catfish Farmers of America association from 1968 to 2016 are included. Written in a reporter's style with many quotes and minimal documentation cited, the book will be of interest to general audiences who enjoy local history and to students majoring in business. This book is recommended for public libraries and academic libraries with business and state history collections.

Caroline Barnett
Head Librarian
M.R. Davis Public Library
Southaven, MS