



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Notes from the President 12/2017

BCWRT Community:

Tuesday, December 12 will feature a presentation by author and Frederick County Civil War Roundtable member Gary Dyson discussing his work "The Ambush of the Isaac P. Smith, Family Ties and the Battle on the Stono, January 30, 1863". In what was a rare incident during the Civil War, the steamer was captured by ground forces.

The year will begin with a look at the Battle of Franklin presented by Chesapeake Civil War Roundtable Program Coordinator and Anne Arundel Community College Professor Dr. Lester Brooks \*. Female troopers fighting during the Civil War? Sounds ridiculous? Historian and reenactor Anita Henderson will introduce you to one special trooper during our February 27, 2018 meeting. Author, historian Bob O'Connor will have a 'first person' presentation on Ward Hill Lamon, Lincoln's friend and self-appointed bodyguard, on March 27, 2018.

Our Annual Banquet is scheduled for April 24, 2018. Our speaker will be Edward Bonekemper who will speak on his latest book, *The 10 Biggest Civil War Blunders*, which will be published in January. An announcement on the banquet location will be coming in the near future.

On behalf of our Board, I wish you all a Happy and Blessed Holiday Season! Whether you celebrate Christmas, Chanukah (Hanukkah), Ashura, Bodhi Day, Kwanza or any other festival of note, May Peace Be With You All!

IMPORTANT REMINDER: *Remember, it's time to renew your membership for 2018.* Yearly dues are \$25.00 for an individual membership, \$35.00 for a family membership. *Additionally, we are always*

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*looking for new members. Invite a friend to our meetings. The BCWRT has many good things happening. Please spread the word.*

*\*Due to scheduling conflicts, the monument debate program has been postponed.*

Robert L. Ford,  
President

### **MSU celebrates new home of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library and Williams Collection of Lincolniana**

STARKVILLE, Miss.—Mississippi State, statewide and national leaders heralded the opening today [Nov. 30] of MSU's \$10 million addition to Mitchell Memorial Library, home of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library and the prestigious Frank J. and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana.

Leaders in education, history, libraries and government -- including the Librarian of Congress and the Archivist of the United States -- praised the 21,000-sq.-ft. addition. The facility contains a state-of-the-art museum chronicling Grant's life and his significance in American history and a gallery dedicated to the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana, a recent donation that was considered the largest privately owned Abraham Lincoln collection in America. With hundreds of thousands of historical documents and items housed on-site, the new

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addition makes Mississippi State a leading destination for research on the Civil War and two presidents who shaped the course of American history.

“The Frank J. and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana and our remarkable Ulysses S. Grant Collection have made Mississippi State and the Grant Presidential Library a truly national center for the study of the American Civil War,” MSU President Mark E. Keenum said.

MSU is one of six universities in the nation housing a presidential library. The Grant Library is managed by the Ulysses S. Grant Association and MSU under the direction of John F. Marszalek, Grant Association managing editor and executive director, and Frances N. Coleman, MSU dean of libraries.

“In 1862, President Lincoln admonished the American people with, ‘it is not that we can imagine better, but can we all do better?’” said Ulysses S. Grant Association President Frank J. Williams. “I am pleased to say that with these galleries, the collections that support them, the wonderful staff that serve them and the people that use them, we have, in a significant way, done better.”

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Skip Wyatt of FoilWyatt Architects in Jackson planned the overall facility expansion, and Washington, D.C.-based HealyKohler Design created the interior museum and gallery spaces. The Grant museum contains artifacts and interactive media that allow visitors to engage with the context of the times and discover intimate details of Grant's personal life and beliefs. Brooklyn-based StudioEIS created four life-size statues to highlight different phases of Grant's life.

Thursday's ceremony featured remarks from Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden, Archivist of the U.S. David Ferriero and other U.S. and Mississippi officials.

"I'm here to give a pledge," Hayden said. "You will have the full resources and services of the Library of Congress to supplement and be a partner with you as you try to expand these resources here. We wanted to say that publicly here today."

The Grant Presidential Collection consists of some 15,000 linear feet of correspondence, research notes, artifacts, photographs, scrapbooks and memorabilia. There also are 4,000 published monographs on various aspects of Grant's life and times. The collection housed at Mississippi State is the largest single collection of Grant papers and additional items in the world.

The gallery for the Frank J. and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana displays, on a rotating basis, more than 100 of the 17,000 priceless artifacts and 12,000 books included in the

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Williams Collection, which the former Rhode Island Supreme Court Chief Justice and his wife, Virginia, have amassed over several decades. The gallery exhibit includes commentary from Williams on the relevance and importance of featured items.

“Lots of people could take credit for what we are celebrating today, but it was a real team effort,” Ferriero said. “As [MSU quarterback] Nick Fitzgerald tweeted on Sunday night, ‘a program is bigger than one person. We pride ourselves on our ability to always give relentless effort.’ The results of that relentless effort are evident as I walk around this campus today.”

The new addition to Mitchell Memorial Library also contains MSU’s Congressional and Political Research Center, which houses nine congressional collections, including cornerstone anthologies on MSU alumni and former U.S. congressmen Sen. John C. Stennis and Rep. G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery. Other collections include those of U.S. Rep. Marsha Blackburn, former U.S. Reps. David Bowen and Alan Nunnelee, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, former Mississippi Lt. Gov. Amy Tuck, State Rep. Steve Holland and State Sen. Jack Gordon.

Others speaking at the dedication ceremony were:

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--"Thousands upon thousands will come to see these exhibits," Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant said. "They will marvel that it is here in Mississippi and they will come to know us better. This is a great day for Mississippi's future."

--"There is no other library like the one we are celebrating today," U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper said shortly before announcing he would like MSU Libraries to be the home of his congressional papers. "This structure is now a one-of-a-kind collection, including the Frank J. and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana, as well as Mississippi State University's Congressional and Political Research Center, which houses nine congressional collections, including those of many well-known MSU alumni ... If it's OK with Dean Frances Coleman, I would like to be the 10th."

--"Today, we're reminded of the importance of preserving and protecting the papers and artifacts of our shared history, so that we may study it, learn from it and move forward together, stronger and with greater understanding," said C.D. Smith, president of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Board of Trustees.

--"This is going to provide opportunities for all of our students in the state of Mississippi and beyond," MSU Dean of Libraries Frances Coleman said.

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--“We have been fortunate to have people working with us to make sure this project is done right,” said John F. Marszalek, Grant Association managing editor and executive director. “The result is before you now for everyone in the nation to see. Our greatest days are ahead of us.”

For more information, see the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library website at [www.usgrantlibrary.org](http://www.usgrantlibrary.org) and the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection website at [library.msstate.edu/williamscollection](http://library.msstate.edu/williamscollection).

MSU is Mississippi’s leading university, available online at [www.msstate.edu](http://www.msstate.edu).



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MSU Photo ID: Officials celebrate the grand opening of Mississippi State's \$10 million addition to Mitchell Memorial Library, home of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library and the prestigious Frank J. and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincoliana. Pictured, from left to right, are U.S. Rep Gregg Harper, Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden, MSU Dean of Libraries Frances Coleman, MSU President Mark E. Keenum, former Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice Frank J. Williams, Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant, Virginia Williams and an actor portraying Abraham Lincoln. (Photo by Megan Bean)

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MSU Photo ID: C.D. Smith (left), president of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Board of Trustees, visits with John F. Marszalek, Ulysses S. Grant Association managing editor and executive director, during Thursday's [Nov. 30] ceremony celebrating the opening of the new addition to MSU's Mitchell Memorial Library. (Photo by Megan Bean)

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