USGA Members Gathered in St. Louis for Annual Meeting

From May 2-4, the Ulysses S. Grant Association held its annual meeting in St. Louis, MO. A record attendance of 67 members gathered for a weekend of tours, lectures, discussions, and performances focusing on different aspects of Ulysses S. Grant’s life. President Frank J. Williams presided.

The staff at White Haven, led by Karen Maxville and Pam SanFilippo, welcomed the group to their site Friday evening with a lovely reception and historical performance, followed by dinner at Sam’s Steakhouse and an enlightening presentation on Grant historical sites by photographer Charles Traub.

Saturday’s programs included a tour of the newly-opened St. Louis Civil War Museum, a lively lunch and group discussion, and a visit to the St. Louis Public Library, where USGA Executive Director John Marszalek spoke on Grant and Sherman’s cooperation during the Civil War, a lecture that was part of St. Louis’s U.S. Grant Symposium. The day ended with a riverboat cruise and dinner on the Mississippi River and a lecture on Grant’s Post-Presidential Diplomacy from Edwina Campbell. The weekend’s events concluded Sunday morning with the board meeting and a meeting where President Frank J. Williams reported to USGA members.

This year’s John Y. Simon Award, which is presented annually at the meeting, came as a complete surprise to its recipient. The Grant Association presented the award to John Marszalek. Harriet Simon presented the award, named for her late husband and long-time Executive Director of the USGA.

The Grant Association will meet in Chattanooga, TN. May 15-17, 2015. Details and registration information will be available later this year.
Education and Entertainment at Contraband Camp Symposium

Thursday, April 17 and Friday April 18, the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library joined Shiloh National Military Park and the Civil War Interpretative Center in Corinth to host the Corinth Contraband Camp Symposium. The program was sponsored by the National Park Service.

Most of the two days’ events took place in the historic Corinth Coliseum Civic Center downtown. The keynote speakers were nationally known historians Dr. John David Smith from University of North Carolina—Charlotte and Dr. Deidre Cooper Owens from the University of Mississippi. Both discussed the significance of African Americans in the Civil War. The program opened Thursday evening with Smith’s talk, a performance from the Corinth Middle School choir, and presentations of awards to the essay contest winners. Historical interpreters George Buss, Curt Fields, and Michael Crutcher brought Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and Frederick Douglass to a twenty-first century audience, as the panel of renowned figures took questions from M. Scott Morris of the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal. The symposium concluded with the famous musician Bobby Horton’s concert of Civil War music.

One of the key events of the weekend was a tour of the Corinth Contraband Camp Historical Site, where Civil War Interpretive Center staff taught visitors about the history of the contraband camps and what made the Corinth camp a model of excellence that no other contraband camp was able to replicate.
Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library Hosted Exclusive Documentary Screening

On March 17, Mississippi State University had the unique opportunity to view the PBS documentary, produced by Great Divide Pictures, *Civil War: The Untold Story* before it aired nationwide in April. The Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library and MSU Libraries hosted filmmaker Chris Wheeler’s local visit on his cross-country tour to promote the documentary. This special event was one of 25 exclusive previews being held around the U.S. in cities such as NYC, St. Louis, Memphis, Atlanta, Nashville, and more.

*Civil War: The Untold Story* is a 5-part series that breaks new ground by examining the war through the lens of the Western Theater—including the critical, yet lesser-known battles of Shiloh, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge and Atlanta. Filmed with sweeping cinematic style on the very grounds where these epic battles were fought, the series recreates authentic scenes and features interviews with top historians to provide new insights on one of the bloodiest and most defining eras in our nation’s history. The episodes highlight the battles, the causes and politics of war, the impact on southern civilians and women, and the relatively unknown roles that African Americans played in the conflict, from enslaved to emancipated to soldier. The documentary is narrated by Elizabeth McGovern, famous for her role as Lady Grantham in the PBS series *Downton Abbey*.

Episode 1, *Bloody Shiloh*, and Episode 2, *A Beacon of Hope*, were shown on MSU’s campus. John Marszalek, who was a historical advisor for the project and appears in on-camera interviews, made introductions. Chris Wheeler was also present for the screening events, which targeted students as well as the general public. The two episodes screened provide new insights into the causes of war, the strategic importance of the Western Theater, and graphically tell the story of Shiloh, the first major battle of the war. In addition, the episodes tell ‘untold stories’ of escaping slaves who sought refuge with Union armies advancing south prior to the Emancipation Proclamation.

Following the episodes were panel discussions led by Dr. Marszalek, distinguished professors from Mississippi State University, and filmmaker Wheeler. Like *Civil War: The Untold Story* on Facebook to find more information on airing dates, local PBS stations, and DVD purchasing opportunities.
**Presidential Exhibit at Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library**

A traveling exhibit titled "American Presidents: Life Portraits" sponsored by C-SPAN and the White House Historical Association made a two-month stop at Mississippi State University as it traveled the country.

The exhibit, co-hosted by the University Libraries and the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library, was open to the public during the months of March and April.

Covering the lives and contributions of men holding the nation's highest elected office--along with those of their First Ladies--the collection includes paintings, photographs, prints and audio recordings. Oil portraits by artist Chris Fagan, historic front pages from American newspapers announcing presidential election results, and audio recordings of 18 recent chief executives are among items on display.

"This exhibit was a tremendous opportunity for our students, faculty and staff to enjoy a truly significant presentation on the American presidency," said Jerry Gilbert, MSU's provost and executive vice president.

Gilbert said the C-SPAN exhibit "complements our own wonderful U.S. Grant Presidential Library."

Since 1999, the C-SPAN network and White House Historical Association have worked together to take the exhibit to locations around the country. The exhibit also has followed the campaign trail for the last three presidential elections, visiting debate, primary election, and convention cities.

"We were excited to host this prestigious exhibit and give the Mississippi State University family, both present day and alumni, the opportunity to view it," said MSU historian John F. Marszalek, the Grant Library's executive director.

Frances Coleman, dean of libraries, joined Gilbert and Marszalek to extend personal invitations for "faculty, staff, students, alumni, and residents of the Starkville community, Golden Triangle area, and other parts of the state to come explore this extraordinary exhibit."
Historian and Editor Hubbell Spoke at Marszalek Lecture

This year marked the thirteenth annual John F. and Jeanne A. Marszalek Lecture Series, which took place March 26 at Mitchell Memorial Library. Dr. John T. Hubbell, retired history professor and former editor of the academic journal Civil War History and Director-Emeritus of the Kent State University Press, was the keynote speaker. His presentation was titled "Fidelity to the Record: Thirty-five Years an Editor."

Hubbell was a history professor at Kent State University from 1968 until his retirement in 2001. He received many honors and awards throughout his career, including the Distinguished Teaching Award from Kent State University and the James P. Barry Award for Editorial Excellence from the Ohioana Library Association. During his 16 year tenure as Director of the Kent State University Press, it won 59 awards for books and journals and had 10 History Book Club Selections. Hubbell was also Editor of Civil War History for over 30 years and made this journal the gold standard for Civil War era academic publications.

Karen Senaga, recipient of the 2014 Marszalek Graduate Student Award and a graduate student in MSU’s Department of History presented her winning essay, “Labor Plantations, Memory, and Race in the Mississippi Delta Catfish Industry, 1990.”

The John F. and Jeanne A. Marszalek Library Fund and Lecture Series was established in 2002 by the Marszaleks and MSU Libraries to encourage use of primary source materials related to the Civil War and Reconstruction, Jacksonian America, and race relations. The series includes a paper presented by a graduate student and a lecture by a historian of national reputation. The Marszalek Library Fund is an endowment used annually to purchase primary source materials to be added to the holdings of Mitchell Memorial Library.

For more information on the Marszalek Lecture Series, please visit http://library.msstate.edu/Marszalek/.

Left: John Hubbell; Right: Leila Salisbury, Director, Mississippi University Press; Mike Ballard, USGA Associate Editor (ret.); John Marszalek; John Hubbell; Karen Senaga; Jerry Gilbert, MSU Provost; Lori Bruce, MSU Dean of the Graduate School; Jeanne Marszalek.
Board Member Profile: Jim Bultema

vice President for Advancement Jim Bultema came to the Ulysses S. Grant Association in a most unexpected way.

Bultema graduated from high school during the Vietnam War. He enlisted in the Air Force at 18 and served for four years, including a deployment to Vietnam, which he had volunteered for. At the end of his military service, Bultema joined the Los Angeles Police Department because “they had the reputation for being the best.”

For 25 years Bultema worked for the LAPD, spending his first 12 years on patrol, three years in the legal unit, and 10 years producing training videos (LAPD had sent him to UCLA’s film school for a semester to prepare him for this position).

Film is an interest which Bultema shares with his wife, Carole, who won a 1984 Emmy for her documentary, “America Remembers John F. Kennedy.” She worked with Bultema on a documentary on the LAPD, which was the inspiration for his recent book, Guardians of Angels: A History of the Los Angeles Police Department. Carole also – inadvertently – led him to discover Ulysses S. Grant.

“In high school I was not a good student,” Bultema said. “I did not care about history, didn’t go to college. After I met Carole, she would drag me into antique stores, which I despised.” On one of these visits, however, an old book caught his eye, he said. It was an 1868 biography of Grant, written by Albert D. Richardson. He read the book, and it sparked his interest, leading to a Bachelor’s degree in history and a Master’s degree in library science from the University of Southern California.

Over the years Bultema accumulated a sizeable collection of Grant photographs, one of the largest in the world. The collection started when, as he was reading about Grant, he became intrigued with the image of Grant and what he looked like throughout his life.

“Grant was the most photographed person in the 19th century, even more than Lincoln,” Bultema said. “When I came across an image I had never seen before, it was like, ‘I caught up with you again, General Grant.’”

Bultema’s interest in Grant images and his background in film resulted in a project begun around the centennial of Grant’s death in 1985. He and Carole began creating a documentary on Grant’s life. They funded the project themselves, traveling all over the country to interview historians, among them John Y. Simon.

“We couldn’t get it funded for TV,” Bultema said. “We never finished it, although we have much footage from experts on Grant. These interviews would be great for researchers; it’s material that may not be in any book.”

Bultema has been an active member in the Grant Association since the mid-1970s, and he and Carole became good friends with John Y. and Harriet Simon over the years.

• Continued on page 7 •
He has served as Treasurer and looks forward to his new role as Vice President for Advancement. “We’ve got a good committee and can get things done. I look forward to that challenge,” he said.

Several years ago Bultema’s collected photos were purchased by USGA President Frank Williams and his wife, Virgina. The Williams donated the collection to the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library at Mississippi State University. These photos have been digitized and are available online as the Bultema-Williams collection: www.usgrantlibrary.org.

Grant Family Collection Added to Presidential Library

Last summer, 20 large boxes arrived at the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. As the boxes were unpacked, the staff discovered a number of artifacts that will help shed light on different periods of the lives of Ulysses and Julia Grant.

Some descendants of the Grants living on the West Coast generously donated their treasured heirlooms to the Grant Library because they wished to see the possessions once belonging to General and Mrs. Grant well preserved, cared for, and open to the public.

Among the items in the collection are a set of china purchased in Japan on the Grants’ World Tour, photographs from the Civil War, photographs of family members, and books belonging to Grant during his presidency.

“The cups from the World Tour, the bound reports from the Executive Mansion, and the photographs that hung in the Grant family home help to portray, to our visitors, the personal lives of the Grants. Patrons are excited to view items used by President and Mrs. Grant, as it helps to establish a personal connection,” said Ryan P. Semmes, Archivist.

John F. Marszalek, Executive Director, added, “We are pleased to add this donation to our collections. It is meaningful not only to add material from Ulysses and Julia Grant’s public and personal lives, but because they were donated by descendants of the Grants, this makes them even more significant.”

Left: Blue and white patterned china dinner plate belonging to U.S. and Julia Grant; Right: Framed photograph of Nellie Grant.
Scapegoat of Shiloh by Kevin Getchell

Book Review by David S. Nolen, USGA Assistant Editor

Kevin Getchell's book Scapegoat of Shiloh: The Distortion of Lew Wallace’s Record by U.S. Grant, while marked by some significant flaws, succeeds in raising important questions about the official history of the events surrounding the Battle of Shiloh and the interpretation of the events by the participants themselves.

Getchell contends that Grant’s errors in preparedness, communication, and general logistical operations are more to blame for the carnage and chaos experienced on the first day of Shiloh than Gen. Lew Wallace’s actions. In particular, the author argues that using the chief quartermaster of Grant’s forces, Capt. A.S. Baxter, as a messenger to Wallace was a pivotal mistake in a series of errors on that first day of battle. As the Northern press and horrified public demanded answers for the number of casualties, Getchell asserts that Grant and his subordinates actively worked together to place blame on Wallace for arriving at the front too late to take part in the conflict of the first day. The reason for Wallace’s late arrival, according to Getchell, was Grant’s lateness in sending word to him, not Wallace’s choice of roads.

Among the strengths of this study is that it identifies important questions about the logistics and supply lines of the Union Army at Shiloh. The discussion of the lapses that occurred in the confusion of the battle provides opportunities for further exploration of both Grant’s actions and Wallace’s responsibility. Getchell also explores Wallace’s movements and the circumstances relating to the timeline of when orders were sent. The inclusion of recently discovered primary source documents belonging to 1st Lt. Richard P. Derickson will certainly be of interest to students and scholars of the battle.

However, there are problems with the book that detract from the overall discussion. First of all, the book lacks a historiographical essay to situate it in the context of the larger discussion of Grant and Wallace at Shiloh. In addition, the discussion does not proceed in a linear fashion, making it difficult for the reader to easily weigh the evidence, compare the varying accounts, and evaluate the author’s argument. This difficulty is exacerbated by the inclusion of interesting though not directly pertinent digressions regarding the author’s personal thoughts on the horrors of war, rumors of Grant’s drinking, and Machiavellian principles, among others. The reader will find more speculation without sufficient evidence than is normally expected in an academic work. This speculation is often couched in terms of what is “likely,” but there are too few sources cited as evidence for these assertions.

Nonetheless, anyone who is interested in Grant, Wallace, Shiloh, or the Western Theater will find this book thought-provoking. It participates in the ongoing dialogue of Shiloh history, and, like several other recent works, exhorts its readers to re-visit the traditionally accepted version of Wallace’s actions and their impact at Shiloh.
A Journey to Nineteenth-Century Gettysburg

By Bailey Powell, Staff Writer

His photograph looks like it has been around since the mid-nineteenth century. But it is only weeks old.

It was taken by Rob J. Gibson, a world renowned master of Victorian style photography. He owns an unassuming shop in the historic city of Gettysburg, outside of the national park. My family wanted a Victorian style photo, and we are so glad we wandered into Rob’s modest studio.

As soon as we walked in, Rob and his wife, Dee, who run the studio together full time, greeted us. The walls of the studio were covered in “old” photos and newspaper and magazine articles of work Gibson has done. Gibson showed us the two authentic nineteenth century options for printing the photo: glass or tin. We chose tin. He then placed it in the dark room to dry without light exposure while he posed us for the photo. After focusing the camera, he took the wet plate from the dark room and slid it into the camera.

Gibson then instructed us to stand very still for fifteen seconds once he removed the cap from the camera. Removing the cap allows the light to reach the wet plate and creates a negative photo. He was sure to provide a stable object for us all to steady our gaze. The fifteen seconds of light exposure during this time period is considered the equivalent of the modern day “shutter speed.”

After the time was up, Gibson removed the plate from the camera and showed us the negative frame it produced. He then poured another liquid into a small container and submerged the tin plate. As the plate reacted with this mixture, the negative became the picture shown to the right. It was like magic watching the photo come alive through this detailed process. We were able to keep the original tin photo, and in the same day, he created paper prints and a digital version. We received both a new old-fashioned photograph and a one-on-one educational lesson in nineteenth century photography.

For more information about R. J. Gibson and his photography, visit www.civilwarphotography.com

Powell, far left, with her family in Gibson’s Gettysburg studio.
Send us your news!

Do you have any news, such as an event, publication, or book review, related to Ulysses S. Grant or the Civil War? If you’d like to share your news in an upcoming issue of the USGA newsletter, please email with a photograph, if available, to mhenderson@library.msstate.edu.

• Updating our Records •

If you have moved or changed your contact information recently, please send us your updated mailing address, phone number, and email. There are also a number of members who have outdated mailing addresses, and we are not able to get in touch with them. If you know anyone listed below, or someone who is a member and is not receiving communications from the Grant Association, please encourage them to call Meg Henderson at 662-325-4552 or email mhenderson@library.msstate.edu. Thank you!

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In the Next Issue...

USGA President and Executive Director lecture on the American Queen riverboat
Ulysses S. Grant statue in Washington—its preservation