It is my pleasure to introduce the initial issue of the Ulysses S. Grant Association/Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library Newsletter. It has long been a dream to begin a quarterly on-line newsletter to tie us here at Mississippi State University to all our members throughout the world. We hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and staying informed about our activities.

Our editor is Meg Henderson, who replaced Elizabeth Coggins within the last month. As you will learn from reading about her in this newsletter, Meg has extensive experience, both in the high school and college classrooms, and through her own freelance writing. We are fortunate to have someone of her ability taking on this task. She will produce an outstanding publication and will always be open to suggestions for possible articles.

We want to begin this interactive process by asking you to suggest a title for this electronic publication. What title would best represent the newsletter of our association and presidential library? Send your suggestion to Meg Henderson, whose email address is located in the newsletter. The deadline for submissions is June 15, 2013. The author of the winning entry will receive a copy of volume 32 of the Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, autographed by the volume’s editors.

Now, please read and enjoy this inaugural issue.

John F. Marszalek
Ryan Semmes has been an Assistant Archivist at the USGA since 2007. In January 2013, he was named Interim Coordinator of the CPRC, USGA and University Archives collections. Originally from Natchez, MS, Ryan’s previous work includes being Assistant Archivist at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, LA and Archivist with History Associates Incorporated in Rockville, Maryland. He then was Archivist and Interim Special Collections Coordinator at the Washington, DC Public Library before taking the position at the Mississippi State University Libraries’ Congressional and Political Research Center. Currently, Ryan is working on his Ph.D. in History at Mississippi State University.

Dr. John F. Marszalek has been Executive Director and Managing Editor of the Ulysses S. Grant Association since the collection moved to Mississippi State University in December 2008. He was a W. L. Giles Distinguished Professor of History at MSU, retiring in 2002. He is a specialist in the U. S. Civil War, the Jacksonian Period, and race relations and has written or edited 13 books and over 300 articles and book reviews. He is co-executive director of the Historians of the Civil War Western Theater and a member of the Board of Advisors of the Lincoln Forum, the Lincoln Prize, and the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. He and his wife, Jeanne, have established Library Fund endowments at Mississippi State University and Canisius College, his alma mater.

Dr. Aaron S. Crawford is Associate Editor at the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library and has worked in the department since 2010. He acted as Assistant Editor of The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Vol. 32. Before coming to the library at Mississippi State University, he was Assistant Editor at the James K. Polk Correspondence Project at the University of Tennessee. He has also acted as Assistant to the Modern Political Archivist and Director of Research at the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy. Prior to his editorial and library experience, Aaron was an Adjunct History Professor in Tennessee.

Amanda S. Carlock is a Library Associate in the Congressional and Political Research Center. She has worked at the CPRC and University Archives since Feb. 2008 and with the USGA since it came to MSU in 2008. She handles the reference desk and does a little of everything. She assists in-house and distance patrons with everything from research reference questions to directional questions. Before joining the CPRC, Amanda graduated in 2003 with an Associate’s Degree in General Arts and Sciences. She worked for a catering company for several years before moving to Starkville and then for a local law firm as a legal assistant/office manager for three years before starting work at the Mitchell Memorial Library.

Meg Henderson recently joined the staff at the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. She comes from a background of freelance writing and teaching English at the high school and college levels. As a Senior Library Associate, Meg assists library patrons and association members, helps coordinate the USGA annual meeting, and assists with the Grant collection and other various library and association-related activities. In her spare time, she is a runner, triathlete, and bicycling advocate. Meg is very excited to be part of the Grant Library and looks forward to meeting some of the U.S. Grant Association members at the annual meeting in May.
Earlier this year, Elizabeth Coggins left the Ulysses S. Grant Association to take a position as Visitor Services Coordinator at the George W. Bush Library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX. She is in charge of the visitor experience at the George W. Bush Presidential Center, where she coordinates customer service training for the staff, coordinates group and school tours and assists with the planning of special events sponsored or hosted by the Museum. We wish her the very best in her new job, but she will be missed here!

Marszalek Lecture Series

On March 20, 2013, an audience of faculty, staff, students and community members filled the John Grisham Room in Mississippi State University’s Mitchell Memorial Library to attend this year’s John F. and Jeanne A. Marszalek Library Fund lecture. The Marszaleks began the Library Fund and Lecture Series in 2003.

This year’s lecture featured a panel of John Marszalek’s former doctoral students who recently published a collection of essays, “Of Times and Race: Essays Inspired by John F. Marszalek.” These essays examine the numerous and complex roles of race relations in military and civilian life from the Jacksonian period to the New Deal.

The book’s co-editors and contributing authors, Dr. Michael B. Ballard and Dr. Mark R. Cheatham, had wanted to honor their teacher and mentor with a tribute book for several years. Then everything came together: a theme that would reflect the influence of Marszalek’s scholarship and a group of authors who were eager to participate in such a project.

The other contributing authors, Dr. Thomas D. Cockrell, Dr. Stephen S. Michot, Dr. Horace Nash, and Dr. Timothy Smith, unanimously expressed their gratitude to Marszalek for the substantial role he played in their successful academic careers.

“This is not so much about what we did but about who we did it for,” said Cockrell.

Smith added, “He’s not a mentor who stops when you graduate. He’s still advising me and still providing that mentor relationship.”

Marszalek was honored by the book as well as the sentiment behind it. “It’s touching to know these young men have put together this work. What makes teaching so worthwhile is that you can look back and see your students become a great success,” he said.
The 2013 USGA Annual Meeting will be held May 3-5 in Georgetown, Ohio. We look forward to touring the Land of Grant, learning from our speakers and tour guides, eating well and reuniting with old friends and colleagues and meeting new people from around the U.S. as well as Canada and England. We look forward to seeing you there!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Please email Meg Henderson at mhenderson@library.msstate.edu.