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The background of the cover is an abstract watercolor painting. It features a dense pattern of overlapping, roughly circular shapes in various shades of blue, teal, and orange. The colors are blended and layered, creating a textured, organic feel. The overall composition is vibrant and artistic.

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On the cover: Artwork by Nancy Anderson, Business Manager of First Regional Library.
Artwork was created using alcohol ink.

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President's Page

It has been a productive spring for us all in the MLA community. I would like to take the opportunity with this President's Page to tell you about some of the great things that have occurred and are occurring. Those involved indeed do deserve the accolades.

MLA returned to the Capitol on March 15 after a hiatus due to the pandemic. Jenniffer Stephenson, Chair of the Legislative Committee, organized the event and developed talking points to share with legislators. She, along with others who attended such as our Past-President Mara Polk and our MLA Administrator Paula Bass, focused efforts on full and increased funding for MAGNOLIA. During this same time frame, I asked MLA members via the MLA listserv to reach out to their individual legislators with their own personal stories of how MAGNOLIA is beneficial to them and their patrons. I am delighted to say our efforts were heard this legislative session! For the first time in over a decade, funding for MAGNOLIA was increased from \$1,000,000 to \$1,350,000. Stephen Cunnetto, Chair of the MAGNOLIA Steering Committee, deserves our appreciation as well for always keeping us abreast with the needs of the Steering Committee.

Special Libraries Section Chair Joyce Shaw hosted a gathering of MLA members and guests down on the Coast at the USM Campus's Marine Education Center Conference Center. Shaw organized an informative lineup of guest speakers including MLA member Jamie Stanfield who spoke on graphic medicine



publications. The highlight of the event was an afternoon boat ride on the Mississippi Sound in which attendees were able to view up-close the marine life brought to the surface by trawling. It was a great day to gather with fellow members. A similar event will be held in Jackson at the State Law Library later in the summer.

The MLA Nominating Committee reached out to MLA members this spring to organize a slate of nominees for our Executive Board. Thanks to the work of Chair Tisha Zelner and committee members, we have a full slate of nominees this year. Be on the lookout soon for information regarding the nominees and election.

MLA Vice President Phillip Carter and his Conference Committee continue to work hard organizing our first in-person Conference in two years. A joint conference with SELA, it will be held in Meridian at the MSU Riley Center October 11-14, 2022. The Committee is currently seeking program proposals with a conference theme of *Libraries Uncensored*.

Speaking of library censorship, I would be remiss if I didn't use this space to commend Library Director Tonja Johnson and the staff at the Madison County Library System for their strong defense of the right to read. In the times in which we live, it would have perhaps been easier to stand down against the

challenges leveled against the Ridgeland Public Library, but Johnson and her staff stood tall in their convictions and provided us all a model to emulate. Over the last few months, the Executive Board has been watching and discussing the censorship challenges that have popped up, most notably in

Ridgeland. A group of board members met with John Chrastka, Executive Director of EveryLibrary, and discussed ways in which our Board can be more responsive when these challenges arise. More will be coming from those discussions including a call for participation in a Task Force on Censorship.

Managing Team Projects in a Pandemic

The Civil War and Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi

Austin Justice

Visiting Digital Archivist

The University of Southern Mississippi

INTRODUCTION

In 2020 as the effects of the pandemic accelerated in the United States, a hybrid team of on-site and remote librarians, archivists, historians, and students began building the Civil War and Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi (CWRGM), a digital documentary project encompassing tens of thousands of original manuscripts and archival records. A collaboration between the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), and the Mississippi Digital Library (MDL), CWRGM provides free online access to the papers sent to and from Mississippi's governors' offices from 1859 to 1882. Interdisciplinary teams focused on digitization, metadata, transcription, and upload to carry out the work needed to make these documents digitally available.

While professional staff lead these teams, at the project's core are the contributions of remote student researchers. This article outlines the

project and discusses CWRGM's workflow as well as several challenges and opportunities inherent to hybrid team projects. Using the CWRGM metadata team as a case study, the author emphasizes remote team training, development, and communication strategies as they relate to the students who help bring this ambitious project to life through their supervised archival description work. Drawing on the author's experience as a metadata team lead, the paper concludes with insights and lessons learned for virtually managing undergraduate and graduate student team members.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

CWRGM is the brainchild of Dr. Susannah J. Ural, professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi, and was inspired by similar digital documentary projects including the Civil War Governors of Kentucky and bootstrap efforts in Alabama at the time (which have now grown into the Civil War and Reconstruction Governors of Alabama).¹ Ural reached out to the Mississippi Digital Library and the Mississippi Department of Archives

and History to coordinate efforts and create a prototype for CWRGM. In 2018, Ural began applying for funding and was awarded several grants including a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant, National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant, funding from The Dale Center for the Study of War and Society, and funding from the Watson-Brown Foundation to hire a dedicated Digital Archivist.

In 2020, Visiting Digital Archivist Austin Justice was hired to oversee metadata creation, review, and issue resolution. Around the same time, numerous student researchers were brought on board to assist with the scale up of metadata and transcription work. In June 2021, with over 2,000 items, the team officially launched <https://cwrqm.org> and de-commissioned the prototype infrastructure. At the time of this writing,

¹ "Civil War Governor of Kentucky Digital Documentary Edition," Kentucky Historical Society, accessed February 9, 2022, <http://discovery.civilwargovernors.org/>; "Civil War & Reconstruction Governors of Alabama," Alabama Digital Humanities Center, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://adhc.lib.ua.edu/cwrga/s/home/page/welcome>.

the team has completed over 3,750 items and transcribed over 10,000 individual pages.

PROJECT SCOPE

CWRGM's temporal scope captures records that document experiences from the late antebellum era, the secession crisis, and the rumblings of war, through to post-war Reconstruction and into the early Jim Crow Era South. Within this timespan, eight men served as the Magnolia State's chief executive, beginning with Governor John J. Pettus (1859-1863) and ending with Governor John Marshall Stone (1876-1882).² Letters, telegrams, petitions, receipts, legal documents, reports, illustrations, and other papers passed through these governors' offices daily. Upon the project's completion, CWRGM will make available digital surrogates for approximately 20,000 of these documents, complete with scanned images, rich metadata, full transcriptions, annotations, and subject tags.

PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

While CWRGM is a regionally focused project, it enables unprecedented digital access to nationally significant collections. Nineteenth-century Americans from all walks of life wrote to state governors about a myriad of topics. The diversity of historical agents and voices across categories of race, class, gender, politics, and allegiance is evident in this breadth of subject matter. In these collections, one can rightly expect to find wartime correspondence from famed Confederate officials like Jefferson Davis and rebel military leaders like John C. Pemberton. Less well-known are

the letters, telegrams, and reports documenting the processes of forming, arming, clothing, feeding, and fielding Mississippi's local militias.³ State and home guards played critical roles throughout the country in the Civil War, yet some remain understudied.

Sometimes excluded from traditional narratives are the 20,000 Mississippians who served in the United States Army and Navy during the conflict. One such soldier was Tippah County resident W. T. Rowland of the 11th Illinois Cavalry Regiment. Writing to Governor William Sharkey in the war's immediate aftermath in 1865, Rowland questioned why the authorities in his home state required a Union veteran to take the "Amnesty Oath" of allegiance to the United States in the same manner that "a Rebel Soldier does to become a loyal citizen."⁴ Asking Sharkey to instruct him as to "what it takes to constitute a loyal citizen," Rowland's letter hints at the experiences of U.S. military members returning to their communities in the South.⁵ This is but one example of the many questions of loyalty, dissent, and citizenship raised in CWRGM documents by Mississippi's Unionists, draft resisters, deserters, and veterans.

As the issues of the common soldier and sailor come into view, so too do the challenges of the home front. Petitions for hardship discharges from families of military personnel, letters from people with disabilities or illnesses, reports from women's aid societies, and requests from impoverished people for salt or other relief appear frequently in these collections. Crime and persecution are present as well. These

materials can offer insight into the effects on daily life from the unimaginable death, destruction, and social, political, and financial strains the war wrought.

Crucially, a portion of the papers that came through the governors' offices can help illuminate the lives of formerly enslaved men and women. Among them are Freedmen's Bureau records as well as petitions like that of Lambert Moore, who successfully sought a refund of taxes collected on profits made from Moore's labor while he was enslaved.⁶ CWRGM collections are rich with accounts that paint fuller pictures of African American military experiences, post-war life, and the fights for citizenship, representation, and inclusion.

The above is but a sampling of the stories represented in these tens of thousands of records. The questions, problems, debates, opportunities, events, and other ideas or experiences that emerged throughout

2. For more information on Mississippi's governors, see "Governors of Mississippi from 1817 to Present," *Mississippi History Now*, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/governors-of-mississippi-from-1817-to-present>.

3. For more historical context on the state militia, see Tracy L. Barnett, "Mississippi 'Milish': Militiamen in the Civil War," *Civil War History* 66, no. 4 (December 2020): 349-379.

4. Letter from W. T. Rowland to Mississippi Governor William L. Sharkey, 11 August 1865, Governor Sharkey Collection Series 771, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS. Accessed via the *Civil War & Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi*, https://cwrgrm.org/item/mdah_771-956-03-09, (accessed February 9, 2022).

5. Ibid.

6. Petition from Lambert Moore to Mississippi Governor William L. Sharkey, 28 September 1865, Governor Sharkey Collection Series 771, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS. Accessed via the *Civil War & Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi*, https://cwrgrm.org/item/mdah_771-956-10-16, (accessed February 9, 2022).

Mississippi communities were frequently microcosms of larger national challenges during this revolutionary period in our country's past. The CWRGM project makes these collections virtually searchable for use in teaching, scholarly research, and genealogy, and for general public interest.

PROJECT WORKFLOW

To execute such a large-scale, interinstitutional, and interdisciplinary project efficiently and effectively, a well-defined workflow is needed. CWRGM uses a model that allows document digitization and metadata creation to happen simultaneously.⁷ Staff at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) digitize the physical collections while student employees at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) write item-level metadata based on existing MDAH calendars. These calendars contain some basic information like series numbers, items' dates, authors, recipients, and short notes or descriptions. Students extract as much information and context as possible from the calendars and use Google Sheets to record the information in several metadata fields. They may also use other internal and external resources to find pertinent information about the people, places, or events mentioned in each document, which can aid both description efforts and assignment of accurate Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH).

Metadata drafts must conform to the formatting rules for each field specified in the CWRGM Metadata Guidelines, a standard based on Dublin Core data elements and developed to comply with the

Mississippi Digital Library's Metadata Best Practices.⁸ When a student finishes drafting metadata for an item, the draft goes through a two-stage review process. In the first stage, another advanced student proofs the draft to ensure the metadata is accurate, free from typos or errors, and follows the Guidelines. When passed to the second stage, the CWRGM Digital Archivist conducts a final review of the revised metadata and makes corrections and additions by cross-referencing the metadata with the newly received image files containing MDAH's scans of the original historical documents.

There is a definite advantage to the above-described approach. Under this model, the USM-based CWRGM metadata team can create and begin revising metadata for relevant collections without waiting for MDAH to scan each item and send images. This ensures that the teams at MDAH and USM can work concurrently on various aspects of the project. By the time images of each document are ready and transferred from MDAH, the USM-based team will already have prepared properly formatted metadata. The inherent disadvantage, of course, is that drafting metadata based on calendars leaves more room for error. Older calendars may not always be entirely accurate, may contain typos, vague entries, or inconsistencies, and might omit information like additional authors or mentions of geographic locations that the USM-based team seeks to capture. Some of these issues simply cannot be resolved without consulting images of the original materials. To address this, the Digital Archivist

incorporated an issue tracking system into the USM-based metadata team's workflow. Using a dedicated spreadsheet, team members can flag known or potential problems during the drafting process to be assessed and resolved during the second stage of metadata review when the data is vetted against the scanned images from MDAH.

Once the image files are received and paired with the verified metadata, both are uploaded to CONTENTdm for publication in the Mississippi Digital Library. The USM-based CWRGM transcription team, led by CWRGM Senior Assistant Editor Lindsey Peterson, then harvests the digital objects published in MDL to FromThePage, an open-source transcription software.⁹ Both transcription team student workers and remote public volunteers use FromThePage to transcribe documents for the project. All transcript drafts are put through a two-stage review process, during which the transcription team also adds appropriate annotations and local subject tags. Peterson then adds verified transcriptions, annotations, and tags to the project's Omeka-S site. Finalized transcripts are also sent to MDL staff, who add them to the digital library for

7. To review CWRGM project flowcharts and full protocols, see "Editorial Process," *The Civil War & Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi*, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://cwrqm.org/page/editorial-process>.

8. To review MDL best practices, guidelines, policies, and supplementary materials, see "Resources," *Mississippi Digital Library*, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://msdiglib.org/resources>.

9. To learn more about FromThePage, see "Software," *FromThePage*, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://fromthepage.com/software>.

enhanced accessibility.

TRAINING AND MANAGING STUDENTS REMOTELY

Student workers and their contributions are integral to CWRGM. The project employs both undergraduate and graduate students from several majors and disciplines, including history, English, library and information science, public health, anthropology, and business. With a pool of students from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of exposure to archival, historical, or digital humanities work, a robust training program is a must. Compounding the need for thoughtful training and effective management is the hybrid nature of CWRGM work. Most student assistants work remotely on the project. As metadata team lead, the Digital Archivist continually develops remote metadata training regimens and uses tools for virtual student management.

REMOTE METADATA TRAINING

Initial training for newly hired remote metadata students consists of three phases. The first phase focuses on laying a foundation of basic knowledge through a series of three pre-recorded training videos. This video series begins by answering the question “what is metadata?” in easily-understood terms with on-screen examples of historical documents and their corresponding metadata records that contain the “who, what, when, where” information from the documents. Students are also introduced to the CWRGM project, its workflow, and how to navigate the team’s Google Drive folders to access the various documents and spreadsheets that students will need to start their work. The bulk of the

videos’ content then covers the CWRGM Metadata Guidelines and walks students through creating an accurate and properly formatted metadata record in Google Sheets. This walkthrough takes the viewer through metadata creation step-by-step, field-by-field, using the Guidelines and the appropriate MDAH calendar.

The second training phase comprises a review and interactive demonstrations. This occurs through a scheduled live group Zoom session. Typically, this meeting will include two to five students. It takes place only after each new hire has had time to review all three pre-recorded training videos. The session, led by the Digital Archivist, begins with an overview of the meeting’s structure and goals. This includes opportunities for students to voice any questions, concerns, or uncertainties they may have. Once initial questions are addressed, the students embark on a review and application of video series content as they collaboratively write a metadata record as a group. While the metadata lead can coach students in the right direction if they get stuck or need help, this exercise is a good chance for students with different strengths to help each other.

Metadata is meticulous work. To further test attention to detail and comprehension, the trainees critique a second, pre-written metadata draft. Referencing the CWRGM Metadata Guidelines and using the first metadata record they have just drafted as an example, students work together to correct basic formatting and accuracy errors in the second metadata record. Here again, the Digital Archivist offers guidance

when needed and prompts student engagement with questions, observations, and reaffirming or encouraging words.

An overview of the Library of Congress (LC) Authorities website follows the group drafting and critique activities. The Digital Archivist demonstrates how to access and navigate the site. As few students join CWRGM with any level of familiarity with LC Authorities, this vital segment emphasizes effective search tips for LC Subject Headings and the LC Name Authority File. This includes explaining the difference between authorized and unauthorized headings, as well as the usefulness of cross-references in the forms of “see” and “see also” references. Fielding questions and offering examples throughout the demonstration, the Digital Archivist reassures students that mastering use of the site and finding accurate headings require practice. Students will have access to multiple resources to aid them in getting started with LC Authorities and will continue to build search skills throughout their time with CWRGM.

One such practice opportunity makes up the final segment of the live group Zoom session. Each student is assigned one document for which they individually draft metadata. After a brief interlude allotting time for students to write their drafts, during which the Digital Archivist remains available for questions or clarifications, the group regathers. Volunteers may then choose to share their drafts for group feedback. Students may also elect to have the team lead review their draft privately. Final questions, comments, or concerns are addressed before

the meeting adjourns.

The third and final training phase concentrates on more hands-on metadata practice and individualized feedback. Building a foundation of basic knowledge, introducing tools, demystifying metadata, and promoting team cooperation are all important steps in onboarding new students. Once that foundation is laid though, the best way to build on top of it - to learn how to do metadata for different kinds of materials - is to start doing metadata. Each student is assigned fifteen to twenty-five documents for which they independently draft metadata to the best of their ability. The metadata team lead stresses to students the idea that this phase is a continuation of their practice and training—their drafts are not expected to be perfect.

Individual students may submit their completed drafts as soon as they like but must submit them or make alternative arrangements by a set deadline. The Digital Archivist closely examines a student's drafts and responds with notes containing encouragement for what the student did well, answers to any questions or troubles that the student encountered, and any needed revisions to the metadata drafts. (Note: this revisions process is entirely separate from the first stage metadata review that takes place after students are fully trained). If desired or needed, individual students may schedule one-on-one follow-up meetings with the team lead via Zoom.

Following revisions on the first batch, this process repeats at least once more for the student's next batch of twenty-five to thirty-five documents. By then, most students

demonstrate and express enough comfort with the fundamentals of metadata and the use of relevant resources to continue drafting without the need for repeated close readings and feedback from the team lead. At this point, students fully integrate into the project workflow described earlier by drafting metadata independently and continuously submitting completed work for first stage review where any minor errors are corrected by more advanced students.

The prime benefit of this final training phase is that it allows students to hone their skills and produce genuine contributions towards CWRGM's goals while also allowing the Digital Archivist to assess individual students' needs and progress. For an archival endeavor encompassing some 20,000 documents in multiple formats originating across several decades, it is impossible to list every type of document, issue, or challenge students might encounter. Practical experience is the only way students can familiarize themselves with all the varied materials for which they will write metadata during their time with the team. The process of proofing each student's drafts and answering their questions is telling of what individual students gained from previous training phases, what they may have missed, and how keenly detail-oriented they are. In turn, those insights inform both individualized feedback and support, as well as updates or new developments for future remote metadata training materials and regimens.

CHANGE-OVER CHALLENGES

Training is not a one-and-done event. Any multi-year project

employing student workers is bound to face team changeover. While many students remain with the project for multiple academic years, some students will come and go for many reasons. Some may only join CWRGM for a semester-long internship or practicum; others have competing academic, professional, or personal commitments; still more might work in the Spring, take off the Summer, and return in the Fall. When new students are hired or veteran students return at various stages of the project, they need to be brought up to speed. The training video series was developed in part as a response to this challenge, to bring all students up to a base of common knowledge and provide examples to which all students can refer at any time. Still, students need additional resources to understand the context of the project, the varied and ever-changing historical themes that emerge in the materials, and how to use certain tools. For CWRGM metadata students, this is most critical when learning how to search, select, and assign subject headings that reflect what a document is about.

Beyond initial training, internal reference materials for Library of Congress Authorities help both new and continuing students locate and assign relevant, accurate headings for the myriad manuscripts and archival materials they encounter. Created and managed by the metadata lead, these guides collate authorized LC headings and pertinent historical information about the people, places, organizations, events, ideas, and other themes most relevant to CWRGM. For instance, one such reference guide provides

categorized titles, names, dates of office, and LC Name Authority File headings for high-level government officials in the United States, Confederate States, and Mississippi governments from 1859 to 1882.

While this guide to governments is largely static in its content, a more dynamic example is the metadata team's guide for frequently used headings. Broken down into topical categories, the list features the LC headings that most commonly recur in CWRGM's metadata. The list is periodically updated with team members' input to reflect changing trends in the subjects of letters, telegrams, petitions, and other papers passing through governors' offices over time.

Combined with foundational training, these guides aid in bringing students up to speed in several ways. By providing curated lists of directly relevant headings, they help familiarize new students with the types and variety of headings found in LC Authorities. Often, students using the LC Authorities website for the first time simply do not know what to begin searching for because they do not have an idea of what topics or subjects are represented in LCSH/LCNAF. Similarly, examples from the guides clue students in on how to format headings in searches.

As students learn how to search LC Authorities more effectively, they also gain a sense of which topics frequently recur in CWRGM collections. For many subjects, these guides remove any need for new students to "reinvent the wheel," so to speak, as they provide lists of highly relevant headings that prior team members have already documented. In turn, this helps keep

headings for particular topics consistent throughout the project's lifespan. This is especially important when LCSH offers multiple headings on seemingly the same or similar subjects, some of which might contain outdated terms. Headings that refer to Indigenous Americans are prime examples: LCSH authorizes the use of several terms including "Indians of North America" and "Native Americans". Excluding the former from CWRGM's frequently used headings guide and metadata, but including the latter, reinforces a preference for the use of one term over the other in accordance with project guidelines on inclusive language.

There is another great benefit to students in gathering previously documented headings together. The potential for accidental discovery is high. Much like how one might go into the stacks seeking a specific book and serendipitously come across several more related works shelved alongside that book, so too might a student search a guide for a particular heading and discover other useful headings listed in the same category.

REMOTE TEAM COMMUNICATION

Remote team management requires clear and consistent communication. For the CWRGM metadata team, the Digital Archivist achieves this using a few tools, the first of which is Zoom. A standing weekly metadata team meeting, scheduled to accommodate each team member's availability, ensures that everyone has a regular venue for sharing updates, voicing questions or issues, and collaborating or workshoping with their peers. In this way, the weekly meeting is a two-way

conversation. The metadata lead can share team plans and priorities or address concerns with students' work (in a generalized manner, rather than calling attention to a specific individual). Likewise, students can seek clarifications, offer ideas and input, and contribute their own solutions, preferences, and perspectives on team or work matters. The standing meeting also serves as an opportunity for continued development of team members' knowledge and skills, as the Digital Archivist can provide live demonstrations and answer questions about applying updated protocols, using newly adopted software, or effecting solutions to unfamiliar problems.

Throughout the week, the team chiefly communicates via email and Slack.¹⁰ A dedicated metadata Slack channel provides another outlet for student collaboration and discussion. This is especially helpful as many students prefer to start or complete their hours over the weekend when project staff may not be immediately available to assist them. Students working on a weekend can record their questions in Slack to be reviewed and answered by the Digital Archivist come Monday. An added benefit is that Slack is an easy way for the metadata lead to share written answers to common questions with the whole metadata team.

Beyond team-specific channels, all students have access to a general CWRGM channel and Slack's direct messaging system. The former allows metadata students to interact

¹⁰ To learn more about Slack, see "About," Slack, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://slack.com/about>.

and workshop problems, like deciphering a signature on a telegram, with their peers on the transcription team. The latter, much like email, gives students the option to bring up concerns, ask questions, or otherwise share information with staff that they may not be comfortable discussing in group settings or that may not be relevant to the whole team.

LESSONS LEARNED

The programs, strategies, and resources described here all evolved, and continue to evolve, through experience. Along the way, team leads learned valuable lessons about meeting the needs of students and the project virtually. Below are summaries of a few of those lessons.

Training and team development are worthwhile investments and ongoing commitments. It is true that taking on new students, or even teaching new skills to advanced students, can be time intensive. Yet it is crucial that students be trained thoroughly and completely for their first tasks upfront. As the project expands, processes change, and students grow into new roles, so too must longstanding team members be given opportunities to ask questions, refresh skills, and learn new things.

When acting as a trainer, it is best not to assume that everyone is familiar with the tools or processes you ask them to use. One might anticipate the need to introduce students to project-specific protocols or library and archival concepts and programs like metadata and LCSH. Less obvious is the need to familiarize students with more commonplace tools, like widely used software

such as Google Docs or Google Sheets. This point was proven early in the project when a freshly hired student worker accidentally deleted some two-thousand rows worth of data from a shared tracking spreadsheet. The data was easily recovered, and this incident prompted the development of a Google Workspace demo to ensure every team member knew the basics of navigating and using Sheets.

In that same vein, let us recognize that students are, first and foremost, students. This means that they will make mistakes. Some students will need additional help and guidance to master the concepts or skills we teach them. Others will ask for (and do deserve) flexibility, time off, or leave as they balance academic obligations and personal challenges. As librarians and archivists in higher education, everything we do should, at least partly, serve our students' education. Collaborating with students will not always be easy, and indeed can be frustrating at times, but it can also be wonderfully rewarding and is undoubtedly worth it. Whether virtual or on-site, we owe it to our students to show patience, give support, and practice empathy.

Finally, encouragement must be part of the support that we give to students. Let us again take metadata training as an example. Creating metadata is extraordinarily detail-heavy work that requires precise, consistent adherence to set formatting rules. During the draft revisions process in the third training phase, even if a student is doing well, it is easy for all the tiny details like misplaced periods or semicolons to add up and look like a laundry list of mistakes. Reminding students in

this process that metadata work is just unusually meticulous is useful, but not enough. We cannot forget to also point out the specific things at which they are excelling, and express genuine appreciation for their work, their effort, their insights, and their professional growth.

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How The Prison Industry Crosses Us Out

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INTRODUCTION

WHY TALK ABOUT PRISONS AND LIBRARIES?

More than ever, conversations nationwide have been taking place seeking to understand the social strata the prison industry operates within in the 21st century. I started reading to know better the ways in which my work with social institutions has an effect on the invisible members we share a community with—the incarcerated. Mississippi's tie to the prison industry is noteworthy in a few ways which will be discussed, but as more and more we understand the ecosystem present in our social workings, it is worth interrogating the ways libraries are affected by the prison industry and what good we may or may not be to the incarcerated, whom we must believe are equally members of our community. Finally, this article ends with a short bibliography with the intention of both aiding librarians in connecting patrons with similar curiosities to the appropriate materials, and as a general starting place for any librarian interested in taking up these conversations.

THE RAPID EXPANSION OF PRISONS IN MISSISSIPPI, THE DECLINE OF COMMUNITY

Nearly every tradition in Mississippi is tinged with the grip of incarceration. As of now in 2022, Mississippi is the 2nd highest state of incarceration, and so far none of our governing powers seem concerned

with changing. Every institution in some not-so-distant way is affected by or has a direct relationship to the prison industry here, though most don't confront this. As Jim Crow replaced enslaving plantations with prison systems, it's not fair to say we've been losing a Black population to the prisons in Mississippi. Rather, we've been ensuring a Black population stays captive from the start. But many scholars have already written extensively about this, and rather than make this an indictment of our collective morality; rather, this essay presents how the communities that mold our citizens are being robbed.

The rate at which we jail Mississippians should give anyone chills. Writing for *JustSouth Quarterly*, Dr. Alex Mikulich reports that "since 1988, the number of persons imprisoned in Mississippi has increased by 208 percent, from 7,384 to 22,754" (Mikulich, 2010). Mikulich also states that well over half of those incarcerated in this state (about two-thirds) are behind bars for nonviolent offenses. Also at issue is the disproportionate statistics on who lives in this state as compared to who is jailed in this state; African Americans make up 37 percent of our state's population but are 68 percent of the population in our prison system (Mikulich, 2010). Already this is asymmetric. There is absolutely no reason we should believe one ethnicity is inherently more criminal than another, so what kind of social idea is the prison industry manufacturing in our state? The order being created here is not one of life, liberty, and the pursuit of

happiness for all.

"Mississippi is prioritizing locking up nonviolent offenders over preserving and expanding access to higher education for its citizens" writes the Grass Roots Leadership in a case study conducted on Mississippi (Grassroots, 2002). The details of the case study are alarming and draw a clear line on how our state's resources are being funneled unilaterally to prisons over the general well-being of Mississippians. "Mississippi built 16 new correctional facilities, including 6 for-profit private prisons, in the 1990's alone" the report states, and "by contrast, the state has built no new four-year colleges or universities in over 50 years" (Grassroots, 2002). As the state dedicates more funds to building prisons (from 1994-2008 the Mississippi Department of Corrections spent \$72,862,628 on capital outlays for new and expanded prisons, 1994-1998 alone saw an 87.8% increase in state funds appropriated to cover these costs) the state's ability to aid students going to college diminishes. In the end, the students and their families take on the financial burden created by the state's romance with prison building.

THE LIBRARY IN THE PRO-CARCERAL STATE

While it may seem strange to attempt to draw lines between the prison industry and libraries in Mississippi, the two institutions are already entangled together in a few ways. Chiefly among those is the library's historic benefit of prison labor through state contracts. A performance review published to

the Mississippi Legislature in 2013 describes the existence of a book bindery operation active on Parchman Farm. The report details the existence of vocational activities and how they were operated, listing the bookbindery as active from the late 1960s into the early 1990s (PEER, 2013). While vocational programs such as these were promoted as rehabilitative, Gregory Louis Richard in “Rule of Three: Federal Courts and Prison Farms in the Post-Segregation South” points out how the state was poised to benefit from the “facility that would provide all of the state’s bindery needs” from the very beginning (Richard, 2013). I owe my initial knowledge of this to my colleague, J. Szot, who pointed out that in many state-funded libraries, grabbing a book that’s been rebound may put you within one degree of separation from a Parchman prisoner.

Much of the prison industry is invisible, and this invisibility means the borders that define it—that contain it—are fluid. Teresa Helena Moreno has tackled this with incredible detail and care in her article “Beyond the Police: Libraries as locations of carceral care.” Moreno carefully lays out the ways libraries, even with the best of intentions, can and do participate in the carceral state. Moreno writes that “libraries as institutions have a unique placement within the care landscape because they are involved in education, as well as social services that incorporate other forms of care” and that as other resources provided by the state have waned, “libraries have increasingly developed more sophisticated social service offerings” (Moreno, 2021). While this has been

happening, however, the neoliberal shift of reducing federal funding means that while libraries have been expanding their roles, they now have to rely on “significant private philanthropic investments” that ask the library to play the role of being a preventative program that inevitably leads to the further criminalization of its patrons (Moreno, 2021). I greatly encourage anyone to read Moreno’s article in full for a detailed understanding of how the for-profit model of the prison industry and the unique social circumstances of the library pressure libraries to act out components of incarcerating the community we seek to aid.

All of this highlights the complexity of creating meaningful engagement with the entire community while in a prison-heavy state. The issues that arise are that the community members who need access to libraries are likely unable to reach us from a penitentiary cell, and that some of the standard practices of libraries can lead to the criminalization of the state’s most vulnerable citizens. It should concern us that a wedge between who the library can help, or how much of our community has access to library resources, has grown exponentially as more and more live behind bars. How do libraries reach the huge portions of the community separated from us? What are their needs to begin with? If Mississippi did not dedicate so much funding to prisons, how could those resources better Mississippians instead? I am hoping if enough of our state starts asking these questions, answers can be reached collectively. I do know that informing ourselves is the first step to informing our community and

an informed community is better equipped to seek out and champion legislation seeking to change this; to reorient us in a healthier direction.

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

This reading list is in no way comprehensive. The books included here are approachable for those just beginning to read into the prison industry, and their succinctness makes for excellent group-reads. Some are considered classics, and some are recent publications, but they all further each other in their discussion of the prison’s historic significance, how they are operating today, and what that means for the communities entrenched beside them.

Davis, A. Y. (2011). *Are prisons obsolete?* Seven Stories Press.

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison.* Vintage Books.

Gilmore, R. W. (2018). *Golden Gulag: Prisons, surplus, crisis, and opposition in globalizing California, second edition.* University of California Press.

Jackson, G., & Jackson, J. (2006). *Soledad Brother: The prison letters of George Jackson.* Lawrence Hill Books.

James, J. (Ed.). (2002). *States of confinement: Policing, detention and prisons.* Palgrave.

Kaba, M. (2021). *We do this 'til we free us: Abolitionist organizing and transforming justice.* Haymarket Books.

Oshinsky, D. M. (1997). *“Worse than slavery”: Parchman Farm and the ordeal of Jim Crow justice.* Free Press Paperbacks.

Wang, J. (2018). *Carceral capitalism.* Semiotext(e).

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

While searching into the different levels of resources the incarcerated have access to in Mississippi, I found a nonprofit called Big House Books. Big House Book's mission statement is to send "free books by request to prisoners in Mississippi correctional facilities in order to promote literacy and be a vehicle of change for prison reform" (About us, n.d.). Big House Books maintains a list of materials in demand on their website. In an interview with Micah Smith for *Jackson Free Press*, the team stated "We don't want to just forget about the people who are in prison... We don't think that's an appropriate way to deal with people who do something that's considered wrong. It really doesn't help anyone. It's just easier, and it's profit-motivated. We think that prison reform is a big idea, and this is only one piece of that we can

kind of touch on" (Smith, 2015). I reached out to Big House Books who graciously answered my questions on how many books they've sent out to date (33,012) and what they would want librarians in Mississippi to know. Shelby with the organization responded "We are in need of volunteer leaders and board members, and I think that librarians would make a great fit for those roles. We also maintain a list of books we need, if they are cleaning out their collections!"

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as locations of carceral care." *Reference Services Review*, 50(1), 102-112. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-07-2021-0039>

N. D. (2002). *Education Versus Incarceration: A Mississippi Case Study*. Grassroots Leadership. <https://grassrootsleadership.org/sites/default/files/uploads/MSEdVIn.pdf>

Richard, G. L. (2013). *The rule of three: Federal courts and prison farms in the post-segregation South*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Mississippi]. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1644&context=etd>

Smith, M. (2015, November 24). Books Beyond Bars. *Jackson Free Press*. <https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2015/nov/24/books-beyond-bars/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill and Ocean Pollution

Teaching Resources and Reading List for Grades K-12

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INTRODUCTION

Gunter Library at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) partnered with GCRL's Marine Education Center (MEC) to create a reading list to supplement the MEC's education program about the Deep-Water Horizon (DWH)

oil spill and ocean pollution. Books were reviewed based on five points recommended by the [NOAA Office of Response and Restoration](#) as well as other standard library evaluation resources. These materials create a foundation and act as an introduction to the impacts of the oil disaster and ocean pollution and are suitable for placement in a classroom, school library, or public library. The reading list includes a brief description of the book subject, age level, and awards with web links. A bibliography of online and print resources about DWH and ocean pollution for

educators and school and public librarians is part of the work. The primary book reviewer was Megan Le, a graduate student in The University of Southern Mississippi School of Library and Information Science and student assistant at the Gunter Library at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory.

With the Summer 2022 Collaborative Summer Library Program's slogan Oceans of Possibilities™, this list can be a starting point for books displays and library programming. The selections include picture books, easy readers, non-fiction,

fiction, and graphic novels.

The MEC is home to a wonderful assortment of camps and classes for K-12 and located on the 200-acre GCRL Cedar Point campus adjacent to Gulf Islands National Seashore in Ocean Springs, MS. The AIA award winning built environment is designed with nature in mind. Significant features include the MEC Science on the Sphere exhibit, the Osprey Point Nature Trail, a conference center, and a unique suspension bridge with a tree height view of coastal marshes.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Finding titles to include in this project involved searching databases (ERIC, Education Sources and Children's Literature Comprehensive Database), research guides, the World Catalog, Google, and Goodreads and Amazon recommendations. Awards are listed in each entry. The World Catalog and ERIC are available free of charge to Mississippians via [MAGNOLIA](#). Access is provided through public, school, and academic libraries. Books were either purchased or borrowed from the Ocean Springs Municipal Library and other libraries in the Jackson-George Regional Library System.

The "NOAA Office of Response and Restoration Five Points for Evaluation" guided the process. It includes five points:

- Make sure the story informs, as well as entertains.
- Ask where the "facts" in the story came from.
- Look for reputable, original sources of information.
- Ask why different sources might be motivated to show information

the way they do.

- Talk to kids about thinking critically about where information comes from.

LEARNING ACTIVITY RESOURCES

While compiling the reading list was the major focus of the project, we also collected other resources that can be used in a classroom or as part of informal education settings. These resources specifically involve science activities and projects about oil spills.

- Curran, M. C., Bower, A. S., & Furey, H. H. 2017. Detangling spaghetti: tracking deep ocean currents in the Gulf of Mexico. *Science Activities: Classroom Projects and Curriculum Ideas*, 54 (3-4), 59-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00368121.2017.1322031>
- Guertin, L. & Neville, S. 2011. Utilizing Google Earth to teach students about global oil spill disasters. *Science Activities: Classroom Projects and Curriculum Ideas*, 48 (1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00368121.2010.509375>
- Kastler, J., Fillingame, K., Beresford, S., & Greeley, T. 2019. GoMRI research resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. *Current: The Journal of Marine Education*, 33 (1), 1-45. <http://doi.org/10.5334/cjme.18>
- Kauble, C.A., 2011. Oil Spill cleanup. *Science Activities*, 48 (1), 9-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00368121.2010.504973>
- Zimmermann, L.A., Feldman, M. G, Benoit, D. S., Carron, M. J., Dannreuther, N. M., Fillingham, K. H., Gibaut, J. C., Pettit, J. L., Ritchie, J. B., Rossi, R. R., & Sempier, S. H. 2021. From disaster to understanding: formation and accomplishments of the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative. *Oceanography*, 34 (1), 16-29. <https://tos.org/oceanography/issue/volume-34-issue-01>

WEB RESOURCES

Both government agencies and conservation organizations maintain websites that can be used to support knowledge building and hands on activities regarding oil spills, response, and recovery. Sites include links to podcasts, videos, webinars, lesson plans, and career resources.

National Wildlife Federation. 2020. 10 Species, 10 Years Later:

A Look at Gulf Restoration after the Deepwater Horizon Disaster. <https://restorethegulf.nwf.org>

- This comprehensive website provides information about the "ecosystem level injury" and recovery efforts since the 2010 BP oil spill. Includes information about invertebrates, fish, birds, and sea mammals with links to additional resources. Ages 10-YA

Sea Grant in the Gulf of Mexico. <https://gulfseagrant.org/>

- Highlights the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant regional programs in Mississippi-Alabama, Texas, and Florida. Includes spill science resources—webinars, publications, workshops, and contacts. Links to other impacts on the Gulf of Mexico such as plastic pollution and harmful algal blooms.

RestoreTheGulf: official federal government site for spill response and recovery <https://www.restorethegulf.gov/>

- In September 2018, the RESTORE Council began providing webinars as an opportunity for Gulf stakeholders to learn more about our activities as part of a new initiative, RESTORE Education Opportunities Series (REOS). REOS is a collection of webinars aimed to not only provide education related to the path towards the next Funded Priorities List, but also to return to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to explain how the RESTORE Council and similar restoration efforts are working to restore the Gulf (RestoreTheGulf).

Smithsonian Institution Ocean: Find Your Blue. Gulf Oil Spill. <https://ocean.si.edu/conservation/gulf-oil-spill>

• For students and teachers, this site dives into all the topics related to the DWH oil spill. Has an oil spill interactive plus articles, updates, and discussions of impacts.

NOAA: *Oil Spills*. <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/ocean-coasts/oil-spills>

• Includes lesson plans, data resources, multi-media, background information, and career resources.

VIDEO RESOURCES

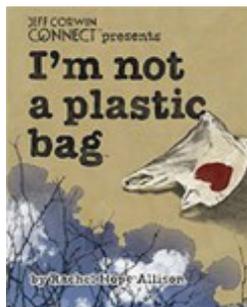
Berg, P. (Director). (2017). *Deepwater Horizon*. [Film on DVD]. Summit Entertainment; TIK Films.

• A dramatic telling of the events just before, during, and shortly after the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster.

Journey to Planet Earth. Dispatches from the Gulf. <https://dispatchesfromthegulf.com/journey/>

• Hosted and narrated by actor Matt Damon, the “dispatches” are three one-hour documentaries that follow a global team of scientists who investigate the health of the Gulf of Mexico following the BP oil spill. Website includes classroom resources.

READING LIST FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS



Allison, R. H. (2013) *I'm Not a Plastic Bag*. Boom! Studios, 2013.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch comes to life as a living, growing island with feelings of loneliness and longing and a massive accumulation of plastic, old tires, a rubber duck, and an umbrella. The

only text are words by the trash—hello, nice day, thank you, and come in. Sea creatures encounter the growing morass, and an albatross dies ingesting debris, becoming part of the miasma. The Foreword explains the magnitude of the problem, while sections at the end explain the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, endangered marine species, and marine debris in more detail and how people can help minimize ocean pollution. Recommended from The Magazine of the Sierra Club. Ages 11-17. Ages 9+

Barnard, B. (2017). *The New Ocean: The Fate of Life in a Changing Sea*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Our planet is covered mostly with water, but life in the ocean is in trouble. The ocean is becoming hotter, more polluted, and, in places, empty of life. This story follows jellyfish, orcas, sea turtles, tuna, corals, and blue-green algae. Green Earth Book Award, 2018, Short List; and NYPL 2020 Election Reading List for Kids. Ages 9-14.

Benoit, P. (2011). *The BP Oil Spill*. Children's Press.

A *True Book: Natural Disasters* series investigates the events leading up to a disaster, explores the causes, and ponders how the events changed, or could alter, history. This series includes an age appropriate (grades 3-5) introduction to curriculum-relevant subjects and a robust resource section that encourages independent study. Ages 8-12.

Berger, M., & P. Mirocha. (1999). *Oil Spill!* Houghton Mifflin.

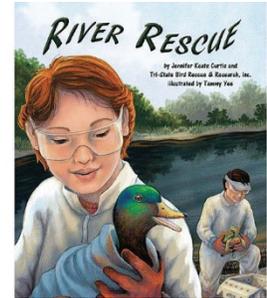
Berger and Mirocha focus on one of the worst spills in history, the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill. They explain with bold, full color illustrations why oils spills happen, how experts clean up after them, and what effect spilled oil has on ocean plants and wildlife. Winner of the American Association for the Advancement of Science/Subaru Science Books & Films Prize for Outstanding Science Series. Ages 5-10.

Burns, L. G. (2010). *Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science of Ocean Motion*. Sandpiper/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

With the help from “beachcombers,” oceanographer Dr. Curtis Ebbsmeyer tracks trash from sneakers to hockey gloves, monitoring the watery fate of human-made cargo that has spilled into the ocean. The information he collects is important scientific data carefully analyzed to help understand and protect our ocean. Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Excellence in Children's Literature, 2007, Honor Book, Non-Fiction, Cybils Awards, 2007, Finalist, Non-fiction (Middle Grade and Young Adult), ILA Children's and Young Adults' Book Award, 2008, Winner, Intermediate (Non-fiction), Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children, 2008, Recommended, Riverby Award, 2007, Winner, SB&F Prize for Excellence in Science, 2008, Finalist, Middle Grade Science Book. Ages 10-16.

Cooper, T. (2015). *The Marauders: A Novel*. Broadway Books.

When the BP oil spill devastates the Louisiana Gulf Coast, a shrimper Gus Lindquist, who has nothing left but a dying dream, is to find the lost treasure of pirate Jean Lafitte. With his metal detector and Pez dispenser full of Oxycontin, Lindquist steers his shrimp boat into the Louisiana swamps. YA+



Curtis, J. K., & Yee, T. (2020). *River Rescue*. Arbor-dale Publishing.

When oil spills, workers hurry to clean the land and water. But oil spills can also affect every animal that lives in the area. On the East Coast, a team from Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research rushes to the scene to save as many as possible. This illustrated nonfiction is based on the extensive experience of the Oiled Wildlife Response Team at Tri-State. Green Earth Book Award, 2020, Long List, Children's and Young Adult Nonfiction. Ages 4-8.

Davies, B., & J. Poh. (2020). *Little Turtle and the Changing Sea*. Tiger Tales.

This story follows the Little Turtle that, year after year, she travels to the beach where she was born, and along the way, she marvels at the wonderful sights around her. But during one journey, when she's older and bigger, Turtle notices that things look different in her ocean. Plastic bags and other pieces of garbage have been dropped into the water, and Turtle doesn't recognize her home anymore. Giverny Book Award, 2021, Winner. Ages 3-7.

Dembicki, Matt. (2012). *Xoc: Journal of a Great White*. Oni Press,

Xoc, a female great white shark, travels from the coast of California over 2000 miles across the Pacific Ocean accompanied by a sea turtle as she migrates to her birthing grounds. Along the way there is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, humans who hunt for shark fins, and predatory orcas. Xoc has strong conservation themes, good shark biology information, and a compelling story. Ages 12+

Duin, S., Wheeler, S., M. Rosen, & T. Orzechowski. (2011). *Oil & Water*. Fantagraphics Books.

Oil And Water follows 10 people into the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil-spill. The contradictions of a disaster caused by the very industry that is the economic foundation of a community forces beliefs to be questioned when the volunteer cleanup workers come face-to-face with the diverse and pragmatic locals. YA+

Duden, J., & S. Walker. (1999). *Oil Spills!: The Perils of Petroleum*. Perfection Learning Corp.

When the Exxon Valdez slammed onto rocky Bligh Reef, 11 million gallons of crude oil blackened the water. Skipping Stones Honor Award, 2001, Winner. Ages 7-9

Landau, E. (2011). *Oil Spill!: Disaster in the Gulf of Mexico*. Millbrook Press.

Award-winning nonfiction children's book author Elaine Landau has written over 300 books for young readers. She presents facts about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that began on April 20, 2010. Cybils Awards, 2011, Nominee, Non-fiction (Middle Grade and Young Adult). Ages 8-13



Lindstrom, C., & M. Goade (2020). *We Are Water Protectors*. Roaring Brook Press.

Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, *We Are Water Protectors* issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption. Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children, 2021, Honor; Cybils Awards, 2020, Nominee, Fiction Picture Book; Golden Kite Award, 2021, Honor; Jane Addams Children's Book Award, 2020, Winner; Jane Addams Children's Book Award, 2021, Winner; Kids' Book Choice Awards, 2021, Nominee; Kirkus Prize, 2020, Finalist, Young Reader; Mitten Award, 2021; Randolph Caldecott Medal, 2021, Winner. NYT Bestseller Children's Picture Book. Ages 3-8

Lord, M., & Blattman, J. (2020). *The Mess That We Made*. Flashlight Press.

This book explores the environmental impact of trash and plastic on the ocean and marine life, and it inspires kids to do their part to combat pollution and includes a discussion the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Northern Dawn Book Awards, 2020, Winner. Ages 5-7

Messner, K., & Forsythe, M. (2018). *The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs: The Story of Ken Nedimyer and the Coral Restoration Foundation*. Chronicle Bks.

The ongoing conservation efforts to save and rebuild the world's coral reefs are the living legacy of environmental scientist Ken Nedimyer, founder of the Coral Restoration Foundation. Cybils Awards, 2018, Nominee, Elementary and Middle Grade (Nonfiction); Eureka! Nonfiction Children's Book Award, 2018, Honor, Primary Grade; Green Earth Book Award, 2019, Winner, Picture Book; Riverby Award, 2019, Winner; SB&F Prize for Excellence in Science, 2019, Finalist, Children's Science Picture Book. Ages 5-11

Nelson, B. (2007). *They Came from Below*. Tor.

While vacationing on Cape Cod, best friends Emily, age sixteen, and Reese, seventeen, meet Steve and Dave, who seem too good to be true, and whose presence turns out to be related to a dire threat of global pollution. Pennsylvania Young Readers' Choice Award, 2009-2010 Young Adult, Reading Olympics Booklist, 2010; High School, Recommended by the Illinois University Library. Ages 12-18

Orr, T. (2018). *BP Oil Spill and Energy Policy*. Cherry Lake Publishing.

This book provides factual details of the BP oil spill from three different perspectives. The narrative provides multiple accounts of the event, and readers learn details through the point of view of an online investigator, California student, and Louisiana shrimper. The text offers opportunities to compare various perspectives while gathering

and analyzing information about a modern event. Content focuses on point-of-view and encourages readers to understand how background and experience can lead to differing views. Ages 9-11

Ostertag, M. L. (2022). *The Girl from the Sea*. Scholastic.

In this graphic novel, teenager Morgan is rescued from drowning by an unusual girl named Keltie who has as many secrets as Morgan. While Morgan is eager to leave her island home, Keltie wants to save the island and a special seal rookery which are endangered by a new tourist excursion boat that will damage the delicate ecology of the local waters and shores with all kinds of pollutants. A sweet teen romance with environmental elements. 2022 YALSA Quick Picks, 2022 YALSA Great Graphic Novels, 2021 ALA Best Graphic Novels for Children - Older Readers, Grades 5-6. Ages 12-18

Peppas, L. (2011). *Gulf Oil Spill*. Crabtree Pub. Co.

This book describes the alarming events of 2010 after an oil rig toppled over in the Gulf of Mexico releasing millions of gallons of oil into the water. The largest accidental oil spill in history, it killed untold numbers of wildlife, poisoned over a hundred miles of coastal land, and devastated the commercial fishing and tourism industries in an area still reeling from the destruction wreaked by Hurricane Katrina. Ages 8-13

Rhodes, J. P. (2016). *Bayou Magic*. Little, Brown and Co.

It's Maddy's first summer in the bayou, and she soon grows to love everything about her new surroundings. Along with fireflies, the glorious landscape, and something else, deep within the water, that only Maddy sees. Could it be a mermaid? As her grandmother shares wisdom about sayings and signs, Maddy realizes she may be the only sibling to carry on her family's magical legacy. And when a disastrous oil leak threatens the bayou, she knows she may also be the only one who can help. Coretta Scott King Award, and Jane Addams Children's Book Award. Ages 9-12

Safina, C. (2012). *A Sea in Flames: The Deepwater Horizon Oil Blowout*. Crown.

Carl Safina travels across the Gulf to make sense of an ever-changing story and its often-nonsensical twists. He deconstructs the series of misjudgments that caused the Deepwater Horizon blowout, zeroes in on BP's misstatements, evasions, and denials, reassesses his own reaction to the government's crisis handling, and reviews the consequences of the leak—and what he considers the real problems, which the press largely overlooked. YA+



Seven, J., & J. Christy. (2011). *The Ocean Story*. Picture Window Books.

Overfishing, pollution, and oil spills have highlighted the need to take better care of our oceans so that the story can continue to be told. Creative Child magazine's 2011 Creative Child Award Seal

of Excellence: Cybils Awards, 2011, Nominee, Fiction Picture Book; Frances and Wesley Bock Book Award for Children's Literature, 2012, Winner. Ages 5-8.

Stewart, N., & S. Bell. (2011). *One Pelican at a Time: A Story of the Gulf Oil Spill*. Guardian Angel Publishing.

Bella and Britt love living by the beach. When they find oil washing to shore from a gulf spill, they want to help but are told there is nothing for kids to do. But when their old friend, the pelican, becomes covered with oil, they help save his life by their quick thinking and action. Literary Classics International Book Awards, 2012, Silver. Ages 2-5

Winter, J. & Winter, J. (2020). *Oil*. Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

Oil is drawn up from deep in the earth by machines, transported through pipelines, and pumped onto a ship that sails out to sea. When the ship crashes into a reef, the oil spills out over miles of ocean, covering rocks and animals alike. Eureka! Nonfiction Children's Book Award, 2020, Honor; Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader Award, 2021, Honor, Transitional Non-Fiction. Ages 4-8

SLIS Notes

For the Love of Graphic Novels

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Information Science (SLIS)

The University of Southern Mississippi

“No longer thirty pages of biff!, bam!, bop!, contemporary titles explore, through original stories and artwork, modern themes like racism, social change, romance, and drama” (Miller, 2005, p. ix)

Graphic novels are not new to the library scene or the literary scene. They have their own awards and lists, like the Eisner Awards, the Harvey Awards, The Ignatz Awards, and the Great Graphic Novels for Teens to name a few. Additionally, graphic novels have won numerous awards that are not specific to graphic novels—*Maus* by Art Spiegelman (Pulitzer Prize), Damian Duffy’s and John Jennings’ adaptation of *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* by Octavia Butler (Hugo Award), *The New Kid* by Jerry Craft (Newbery Award), and *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (Printz Award). Graphic novels have gained a solid footing in libraries and in educational settings (McDonald, 2013). They are not limited to just one library type either; they can be found in public, academic, school, and special libraries. With scholars studying graphic novels and visual literacy (Mouly,

2011), libraries reporting circulation booms (Schneider, 2014; MacDonald, 2013), and even the National Library of Medicine (NLM) touting their use to “tell personal stories of illness and health” (NLM. (n.d.), there seems to be no end in-sight. Now, may be a good time to remind librarians of what a graphic novel is and is not and to share with (or remind) people about some of the great tools and resources out there. While some of this information is similar to what is found in Manga and Manhwa, there are some differences and this article speaks directly about graphic novels.

“Like a comic book, a graphic novel comprises boxed pictures and text and may have several boxes per page. As in a picture book, the illustrations enrich and extend the text. However, in a graphic novel, readers must not only decode the words and the illustrations but must also identify events between the visual sequences” (Bucher & Manning, 2004, p. 67). This unique literary format, or medium, relies on the combination of words and images to tell the story and to tell it well. It is set apart from picture books and illustrated novels since “typically, in a graphic novel, the pictures are arranged on the page in sequential panels, while the words are presented in speech bubbles (for dialogue) or text boxes (for narration)” (First Second Books, n.d., p. 1). Graphic novels can be any genre—fantasy, realistic fiction, historical, biographical, etc. Just like with novels, graphic novels

use the same literary characteristics of characters, settings, plots, and themes to develop the story using a combination of words and images (Monnin, n.d.). There is sometimes confusion with books like *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or *The Dork Diaries* being called graphic novels; this confusion can be further confounded by their eBooks being electronically published by ComiXology. But these illustrated novels lack all of the trademark features of graphic novels—panels, gutters, speech bubbles, and dialogue boxes. These basics (Figure 1 & 2) serve important roles in graphic novels.

The size of the panel can draw the eye to important scenes or characters. A smaller panel with a close-up image can emphasize a character, feeling, action, etc. or panels can be used to create a feeling of distance. Panels with blurred edges can indicate a dream or dream-like state. They are important to the story flow. The speech bubbles shape can indicate a silly character, an angry voice, excitement, and more. Even the gutters play a special role in graphic novels beyond dividing the panels. Action often takes place in the gutters calling for readers to make suppositions and connections on what happened between one panel and the next. In Figure 3, panel 1, the cat is sleeping and dreaming on the cat tree when an alarm clock goes off. In panel 2, the cat is on the way down with wide-startled eyes. What happened between those two panels?—it is safe to assume the cat shot

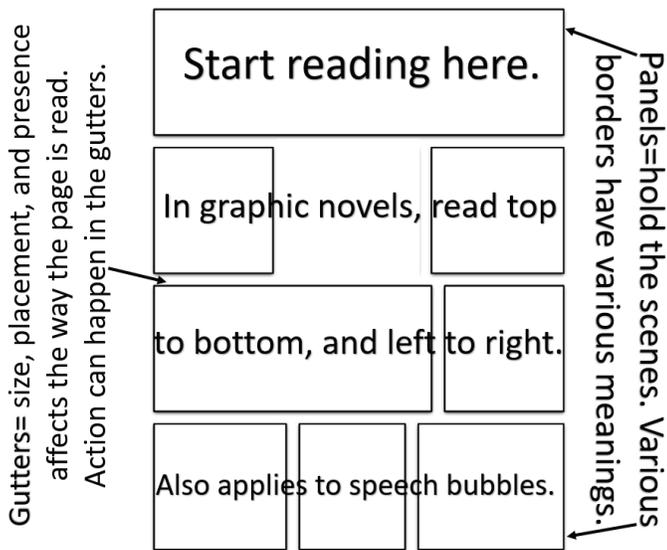


Figure 1. *Graphic Novel Basics*
(created by Stacy Creel & used with permission)

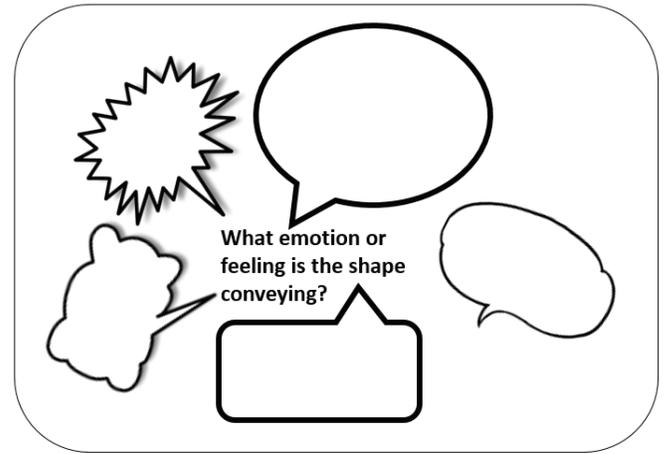


Figure 2. *Speech Bubbles*
(created by Stacy Creel & used with permission)

up cartoon style and came down missing the cat tree. Graphic novels require visual literacy skills beyond textual skills whatever the target age. For a good introduction to graphic novels and all of the things mentioned in the previous paragraph, check out Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*—a classic from the 1990s that is very accessible and free in pdf from Academia.edu.

Just like there is no shortage of graphic novels, there is no shortage of resources available for learning about graphic novels or selecting graphic novels. This resource lists contains some favorites.

RESOURCES

Graphic Medicine: Ill-Conceived & Well-Drawn (<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/graphic-medicine/index.html>) is an exhibition hosted by the National Library of Medicine that highlights the important work of comics in the health field. As explained in the showcase, patients, doctors, and others involved in the promotion of health-care may use comics to teach, comfort, or learn about different elements in the health field. The exhibition provides a list of resources for these kinds of comics, with topics ranging from cancer, HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's Disease, sexual assault, and more. Additionally, the exhibition includes

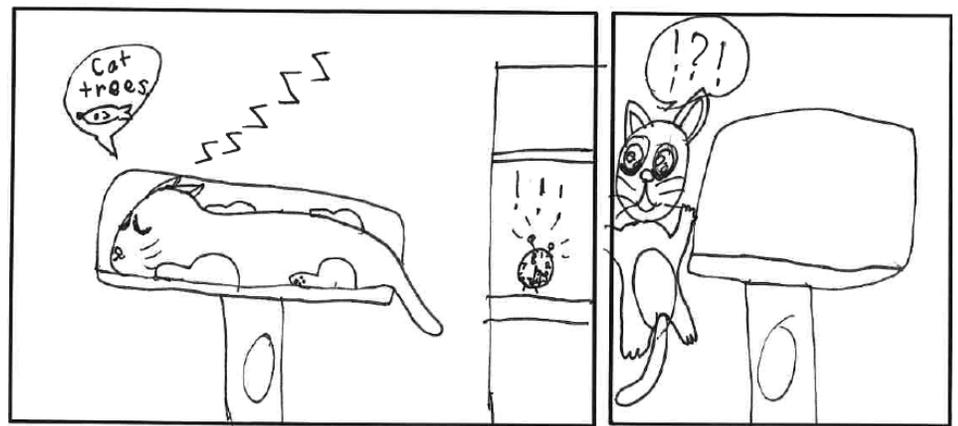


Figure 3. *Gutter Action*
(created by Alicia Chavez & used with permission)

two health comic lesson plans: one aimed at grades 7-10, and one aimed at university students. First Second Books (<https://firstsecondbooks.com/resources/>) is a graphic novel publisher that has published graphic novels enjoyed by all ages across every genre. Their website includes a "Resources" page which is ideally suited for booksellers, teachers, and librarians. For booksellers, they include a starter pack list of their books on their Edelweiss catalog. For teachers and librarians, their website links to activity kits and classroom guides on the Macmillan Kids School & Library Website. Additionally, they include PDF guides for graphic novels in middle school classrooms, young adult classrooms, and young adults in general. The latter half of their Resources page is dedicated to a list of their graphic novels with their most notable awards.

The MacKids School & Library site (<https://www.mackidsschoolandlibrary.com/>) is a resource created by the MacMillan Children's Publishing Group. Within the site, they highlight categories such as Teacher's Guides, Resources, Events, Creator Spotlight, Diverse Books, Giveaways, and a Digital Catalog. The guides, activity kits, and areas of information are free to the public, and are ongoingly updated. The events on their site occur roughly once a month and are typically recorded so those who cannot attend virtually in real-time may view the discussions later. The books discussed in all aspects of the site are limited to those published by MacMillan Children's Publishing Group and its imprints.

Brodart (<https://www.brodartbooks.com/library-services/collection-development/graphic-novels/printed-graphic-novels>) is a library service vendor

that cater exclusively to libraries. Their page specified here, "Printed Graphic Novels: Appropriate Selections for All Ages" explains the various selection criteria considered when their specialists in collection development select graphic novels to endorse with their KidSafe™ designation. The specific categories Brodart uses to distinguish between the different age groupings are Audience, Panel Layout, Format, Art, Language, Characters, and Content. The age groupings included are ages 3-6, 5-8, 7-10, 8-12, 10-14, 12-19, 14-19, 16-19, and Adult. Additionally, this page on their website indicates the ways their approaches and opinions on cataloging, physically processing, shelving, and display of graphic novels. Brodart notes author and librarian, Jack Phoenix, as their Graphic Novel Selector.

No Flying No Tights (<https://noflyingnotights.com/>) is a page dedicated to graphic novel reviews aimed at teens and those who work to bring graphic novels to teens, such as teachers, librarians, or parents. It began as a class project, but it has since been recognized by various academic journals as well as the Association for Library Service to Children. The page includes sections on comics, manga, and anime, as well as lists organized by staff picks, school titles, starred titles, core collections, intersectionality, and more. One section includes a column for Comics Librarians to answer and discuss questions about comics ranging from collection development, classification, and labeling. *No Flying No Tights* notes that they accept review requests, but requestors should first refer to their explanation of what types of books they do and do not cover.

The "Best Graphic Novels for Children Reading List" (<https://www.ala.org/rt/gncrt/awards/best-graphic-novels-children-reading-list>) is an annual list created by the ALA's Graphic Novels & Comics Round Table (GNCRT) and their Selection Committee. The nomination period for each year opens late in the preceding year and remains open throughout the list's designated year. According to the site, the goal of each list is to promote both awareness of graphic novels and the diverse voices within the comic community. The children's lists are for ages PreK to 6th grade. Each year, the list highlights a Top Ten within their full reading list.

In this one-hour webinar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecM_ZzkAddY) from the State Library of Iowa Continuing Education, librarian Thomas Maluck discusses manga and how it fits into libraries. He discusses how Japanese comics work, recommends titles, and suggests ideas for programming that incorporates manga. The State Library of Iowa notes that this webinar is a fit for all interested in learning more about manga, whether they have some knowledge or no knowledge of the genre. Additionally, they note this discussion can help librarians find and prepare ways to include more manga in their collections and programming events.

Women Write About Comics (WWAC) is an Eisner Award-winning online journal that features comic-centered reviews, reports, recipes, crafts, discussions, and more that are authored solely by a diverse group of intersectional, international feminists. Their aim is to be a safe space for women and nonbinary people's voices in the comic sphere. Beyond the features listed previously, the WWAC interviews comic creators, hosts columns

for opinion pieces, style & fashion, art & design, roundtables, and more. Additionally, the WWAC showcases various lists of comics with themes including but not limited to Favorite Manga of 2021, Best Big Press Comics of 2021, and many Crowdfunding Roundups.

The "Great Graphic Novels for Teens" is an annual list (<https://www.ala.org/yalsa/great-graphic-novels>) created by the ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and their Selection Committee. YALSA notes the items on these lists are recommended graphic novels and illustrated non-fiction for teens aged 12-18. Each list designates a Top Ten within their full list, but both the Top Ten lists and the full lists are available in YALSA's Teen Book Finder Database. Each list typically includes a synopsis for each book in addition to its price and ISBN number. The archived lists range from 2007 to present.

As part of the global response to the Black Lives Matter movement in June 2020, the Graphic Novels & Comics Round Table of the ALA published the "Black Lives Matter Comics Reading Lists" (<https://www.ala.org/rt/gncrt/black-lives-matter-comics-reading-lists>). The GNCRT notes that comic books have long commented on issues addressed by the BLM movement, and the GNCRT has created this list to show their support for not only the Black Caucus of the ALA, but also the Black community. Categories within the reading list include Children's Comics, Graphic Novels & Picture Books; Young Adult Comics & Graphic Novels; and Adult Comics & Graphic Novels. Along with title and author, each book has a synopsis and its publisher information. In the section dedicated to the list's information, the GNCRT provides steps for suggesting additional titles to add to their list.

TOON Books (<https://www.toon-books.com/>) is a children's comic book publisher which designs comics for children ages three and up. The goal of these books is that each collection is designed so that young readers may read the comics themselves rather than have the comics read to them. The stories are created by children's book authors and cartoonists. TOON Books offers three levels for their books, which are divided by interest level and reading level. Level One is ideal for ages four and up, or grades K-1; Level Two is ideal for ages five and up, or grades 1-2; and Level Three is ideal for ages six and up, or grades 2-3.

Diamond BookShelf (<https://diamondbookshelf.com/>) is a resource extension for Diamond Comic Distributors that aims to support educators and librarians as they bring graphic novels to their communities. Diamond BookShelf provides news in the comics industry, lesson plans across all ages, and interviews with comic creators. On their website, they also include various lists for bestsellers, core lists for libraries and schools, new releases, and upcoming releases in the comic industry. Diamond BookShelf also has a space on their website set aside for graphic novel reviews, which are compiled by the site's Editor in Chief, Ashley Kronsberg.

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Students in the School of Library and Information Science's Master's program are encouraged to take LIS 670: Special Topics on Graphic Novels, Manga, Comics, and Anime.

Feedback and suggestions are welcome – send to slis@usm.edu or call 601-266-4228. Visit <https://www.usm.edu/slislis> for additional information about the ALA-accredited MLIS degree program, Graduate Certificate in Archives and Special Collections, and Graduate Certificate in Youth Services and Literature. SLIS also offers a Bachelor of Science degree in LIS as well as a LIS minor. All classes are online and typically meet once each week during the evening hours.

MLA "Gathers" in Ocean Springs

Joyce M. Shaw

*Head of Gunter Library / Professor
The University of Southern Mississippi*

Stephen Parks

*MLA President
State Law Librarian
State Law Library of Mississippi*

On March 25, 2022, Mississippi Library Association (MLA) President Stephen Parks welcomed 20 MLA members and future members to the first of three planned "gatherings." Held at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) Marine Education Center's (MEC) Conference Center, attendees enjoyed educational and entertaining talks, a catered lunch, and a boat trip on the R/V *Miss Peetsy B*. The day began with Edward McCormack, Associate Dean of The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Gulf Coast Libraries, welcoming the members and guests. GCRL Center for Fisheries Research and Development Director Jill Hendon spoke about the Center's history and mission with a special emphasis on the Gulf of Mexico whale sharks, her area of research. Jamie Stanfield, Gulf Coast Library Assistant Professor, presented a look at graphic medicine publications that help increase health literacy. Dr. Laura Blackman, MEC Associate Director, gave the group an overview of the award winning MEC facility and programs including summer camps for grades 1-12 and the Summer Field Program for undergraduates which is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2022. MLA President Stephen Parks updated everyone about MLA happenings, the annual conference in October, and

future "gatherings." After a catered lunch, the group enjoyed a boat excursion on the R/V *Miss Peetsy B*, a 34-foot-long vessel donated to the MEC by singer Jimmy Buffet and his two sisters named in honor of their mother. The 90-minute trip through David Bayou and into the Mississippi Sound included several trawls to get a peek at the local estuarine inhabitants with Dr. Blackman

identifying the sea life and talking about the local estuarine environment. After returning to shore, participants had the opportunity to visit the MEC Science on the Sphere exhibit, take a walk on the Osprey Point Nature Trail, and enjoy tree top views of coastal marshes from the suspension bridge.



*MLA members and guests at the "gathering" in the MEC Conference Center
Photo by Janessa Ullendorf*



*Attendees aboard the R/V Miss Peetsy B
Photo by Janessa Ullendorf*

Sponsors for the boat excursion were USM University Libraries (Dean John Eye), USM Gulf Coast Libraries (Edward McCormack), and Gunter Library (Joyce Shaw). Donors for “swag” bags and door prizes were EBSCO, Elsevier, Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, USM Center for Faculty Development, School of Library and Information Science, School of Ocean Science and Engineering, and University Libraries. Coffee, Tato-Nut®

donut holes, grapes, crackers, and cheese were provided by Gunter Library Coordinator Martha Brown and Joyce Shaw. Meeting space set up and take down was managed by Ms. Brown and Gunter Library student assistant Megan Le.

The MEC Conference Center is a perfect location for small conferences and gatherings of fewer than 100 participants. It is a fully equipped meeting venue with breakout room, catering kitchen, access to

nature trails, and a screened Pavilion. Technology includes Eduroam and guest Wi-Fi, projector screen, and presenter laptop. This unique coastal setting is perfect for seminars, workshops, and other professional gatherings. For information about the facility, contact Ben Weldon, Conference Services Manager at 228-818-8824. For information about Miss Peetsy B. rentals for bayou and sound tours, contact Tiffany McNeese at 228-872-4277



Brennan Collins, Gulfport Museum of History archivist, and Jamie Elston, branch manager downtown Gulfport Public Library, enjoy some time on the water.

Photo by Janessa Ullendorf

SEA-FEVER

BY JOHN MASEFIELD

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

People in the News

Brenda Comfort

Serials & Reference Librarian
Hinds Community College



Minnie Marie Bounds

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of **Minnie Marie Bounds**. Edmondson Memorial Library Branch Manager, Minnie Marie Bounds passed away on November 20, 2021. Minnie fought cancer with amazing spirit and undeniable strength. We are glad to know that she was surrounded by her loving family at the end and thankful that they shared her with us. Minnie was an alumnus of Vardaman High School and Itawamba Community College. She began working at the library in Vardaman through the National Caucus & Center of Black Aging – Senior Community Service Employment Program. She was hired as the Branch Manager in September 2020. Although only with our library system a short time, she endeared herself to staff and patrons. She was much loved and is greatly missed.



University Libraries at Southern Miss congratulates **Carol Green**, **Lisa Jones**, and **Edward McCormack** on their retirement.

Green has served University Libraries for 35 years. She started in 1986 as a library clerk in Serials and Acquisitions. In 1992, Green became the assistant acquisitions librarian, a position she held until 1994, when she was promoted to serials and electronic resources librarian. In 2019, she transitioned to the collection management librarian, the position she currently holds. Green was also the subscription manager for *Southern Quarterly*, a scholarly journal devoted to the interdisciplinary study of Southern arts and culture previously maintained by the Libraries, from 2005 to 2011. She will retire on June 30, 2022.



Jones, head of library technology, retired on May 31, 2022. Jones has served University Libraries for 25 years. She started her career in University Libraries as the assistant to the dean for finance from 1997 – 2011, assistant to the dean for finance and technology from 2011 to 2018, and head of technology from 2018 to the present. In addition, she has served as the director of the Mississippi Digital Library since 2011. Jones was awarded the University Libraries' staff excellence award in December 2021 and most



recently received the Jesse H. Morrison Award, the highest honor a university staff member can receive.

McCormack, professor and associate dean of the Gulf Coast Libraries, has served University Libraries for 29 years. From 1993 to 2006, McCormack was the director of the Cox Library, the original library at the Gulf Park Campus, housed in the Richard G. Cox building. From 2006 to 2008, he served as the interim dean for University Libraries, and in 2009, was named the associate dean of the Gulf Coast Librarians. McCormack has also been an adjunct instructor in history on the Gulf Park Campus. He will retire on June 30, 2022.



Brittany Homan joined the Dixie Regional Library System staff as Administrative Assistant on May 2, 2022. Prior to employment with the library, Brittany worked in retail, banking, and manufacturing. She is a graduate of Saltillo High School and Itawamba Community College where she earned an Associates in General Engineering. Currently she is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science through the online program at the University of Southern Mississippi. Brittany says, "It is an honor to join the team at DRLS and I am excited to begin



this journey. I feel fortunate to work with a group of people who are very passionate about library services, and I know I will learn so much from everyone here.”



Austin Justice, Visiting Digital Archivist at Southern Miss, has been awarded a Scott Hartwig Public History Fellow Scholarship to attend the 2022 Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College. Valued at \$1,025, the competitive award covers tuition, room, and board for public history professionals to experience the Institute’s signature conference. The CWI program explores several aspects of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras through lectures, panels, group discussions, tours, dine-ins and more with leading scholars and public history practitioners from across the country.

As the digital archivist and metadata lead for the Civil War & Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi (CWRGM), Justice is committed to ethical, accurate, and inclusive descriptive work to enhance digital access for the 20,000+ papers included in the CWRGM project. He believes that active engagement in both archival practices and relevant scholarship is the best way to understand, describe, and represent the stories, questions, debates, and experiences of nineteenth-century Americans. Justice looks forward to conversations with CWI faculty, students, and attendees during this unique professional enrichment opportunity.



Jennifer A. Smith, Administrative Librarian at Hinds Community College, was recently appointed

to the Regional Advisory Board for Region 2 for the National Library of Medicine. It is a one-year appointment and consists of five virtual meetings, plus 5-10 hours of additional work during the year. Smith says, “I am looking forward to the opportunity to connect libraries in Mississippi to the programs, exhibits and services that the National Library of Medicine has to offer.”



Peter R. Dean

has joined Delta State University’s Robert’s-LaForge Library as a Reference/Instructional Services Librarian. Dean has an MLIS from Simmons University in Boston, Massachusetts, and a BA in Psychology from Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut. Dean has 14 years’ experience as a librarian at both academic and public libraries throughout Mississippi.



Dale Autry

joined The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries on May 4 as the access services and assessment librarian/assistant teaching professor. Autry earned his Master of Library and Information Science from Southern Miss in December 2019 and a Bachelor of Arts in History in May 2017. He comes to Cook Library from the Brandon Public Library where he was the branch manager. Autry previously worked at Cook Library as Stacks Management Supervisor



and in Special Collections as a student assistant. In his role at access services and assessment librarian, Autry will manage the operation of the Access Services unit, supervise staff, and coordinate creating an environment in Cook Library that is safe and conducive to learning and research. Autry will also lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive library assessment plan.

On May 16, University Libraries’ Special Collections welcomed **John Blackwell** as the processing assistant for His-



torical Manuscripts and Archives. Blackwell completed his bachelor’s degree in History in 2019 and his master’s degree in History in 2019. In his role in Special Collections, Blackwell will work with patrons requesting digital reproductions of collection materials for private research or publication and provide reference services to patrons in the Cleanth Brooks Reading Room. He will communicate with donors to gain historical and biographical information for the completion of online finding aids and arrange and describe historical manuscripts collections in order to provide collection access to researchers.



Let us share your good news! Please send your news and announcements to Brenda Comfort (Brenda.Comfort@hindsgcc.edu) or Hali Black (Hali.Black@usm.edu) to be featured in *Mississippi Libraries*.

Book Reviews

Tori L. Hopper

*Children's & Teen Services
& Programming Coordinator
Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System*

Kolin, Phillip C.

Americorona: Poems about the Pandemic.

Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2021. 73pp. ISBN: 978-1666733075. \$11.00 (Paperback).

Once upon a time, the world came to a complete stop. The saying “Halt, Who Goes There?” has a new meaning. I often wondered what reading about the pandemic would look like, this book has given me insight on what I have to look forward to. This author took the events of the pandemic and place them in a small 73-page paperback, full of poems to inform others of what the conditions were like during COVID-19.

Dr. Phillip C. Kolin takes us on an emotional trip through all the “stages” of COVID-19. The first section, entitled “How It All Started,” Kolin examines the early days of fear and uncertainty. In the poem “Stark Distancing,” Phillip points out the irony of the six feet apart rule the world had to endure, during the beginning of the Pandemic. He refers to it as the ‘same grave distance separating the quick from the dead.’ After living through the rules, I never once thought about it, in that manner.

Throughout the sections, Phillip continues to contrast our present situation with historical antecedents. “COVID Children” and “Hungry and Discrimination” emphasis

how crises impact certain groups to a higher degree than others. “Naysayers” shines light on the misinformation epidemic, which seems to have reached its peak in the face of COVID. “COVID’s Long Haul” catalogs the long-term impacts on the health of both the individual and society. “Saying Goodbye” highlights the emotional toll of our individual losses. Section VI, “Spangled Banners for the COVID Dead” shifts the focus to the virus’s impact on the American population in particular, and as the title of Section VII, “Hope and Beyond,” suggests, Kolin chooses to end the collection on a hopeful note. This is a book that you can read in one sitting; every poem will resonate with you as you read.

*Wil'Lani A. Turner
Coordinator of Circulation
Assistant Cataloger
Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System*



McLaughlin, Chris.

Mississippi Barking: Hurricane Katrina and A Life That Went to the Dogs.

Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi. 2021. 188 pp. \$25.00 (Hardcover)

Chris McLaughlin describes the monumental effort to save hundreds of animals injured, displaced, and orphaned by Hurricane Katrina. The book details one of the important stories of humanitarian efforts during this devastating natural disaster. *Mississippi Barking: Hurricane Katrina and A Life That Went to the Dogs* is really a story about people.

People who had nothing left and who were committed to saving the animals impacted by the hurricane. Also, people who committed everything they had to working together to rescue, and maybe even rehome, the many canine and feline “kids.” McLaughlin’s narration adds a personal touch that makes the reader feel the heartaches and the triumphs of this effort. The rescues took McLaughlin through the Mississippi Coast to the most destroyed areas of New Orleans. However, the story would not have come to life without the heart-warming, as well as tragic, photos by Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Carol Guzy.

McLaughlin begins the book by sharing her thoughts as she makes her way to Waveland, Mississippi, several months after the storm to assist in one shelter’s effort to save as many animals as possible on an impossible budget. As one can imagine, the shelter was overflowing with helpless animals. In the months after Hurricane Katrina, thousands of animals were abandoned, trapped, and hungry. The book also tells of the heroic efforts of Animal Rescue New Orleans. It is also about the founding of McLaughlin’s organization the Animal Rescue Front (ARF). ARF is based in Massachusetts dedicated to rescuing and protecting dogs and cats in Mississippi. Since their inception, ARF has saved over 10,000 dogs and cats in the areas most impacted by Hurricane Katrina. They continue to operate with a focus on Madison, Jackson, Grenada, and McComb, Mississippi, with an emphasis on

the Mississippi Coast in Hancock County.

This book is recommended for both public and academic Mississippi historical and nonfiction collections. *Mississippi Barking* would especially succeed in libraries in Mississippi and Louisiana that collect firsthand accounts of Hurricane Katrina.

Judith Hilkert
Technical Services Coordinator
Hinds Community College



Williams Jackson, Linda.

The Lucky Ones.

New York: Candlewick Press. 2022. 320 pp. \$18.99. (Hardback).

Ellis Earl Brown isn't looking forward to his weekend away from school because it usually means a battle with hunger. Set in 1967, Jackson's *The Lucky Ones* is a portrait of a large Black family trying to make ends meet in the Mississippi Delta town of Wilsonville. The narrative begins as Ellis Earl thinks about how to divide a half a loaf of bread, two Moon Pies, and a few other leftovers from his class lunch between himself and his siblings. At 10 years old, Ellis Earl is preoccupied with

hunger, the health of his little brother Oscar, and staying out of the way of his older siblings. While at home, Ellis Earl yearns to be back in his classroom, with access to his teacher's bookshelves and a guaranteed lunch every day.

Mr. Foster, Ellis Earl's teacher, invites Ellis Earl to church and impacts his life in many ways, encouraging him to speak up and use his voice. For Ellis Earl, in a family with more than six other siblings, using his voice feels daunting and provides a heartachingly-sweet character arc. Concerned with his own hunger and shame due to his family's poverty, Ellis Earl maintains an empathy for others that pulls at the heartstrings and makes a reader want to pull the little boy into a big, warm hug. The story shifts when Mr. Foster asks Ellis Earl to visit Jackson, Mississippi, with his classmates to witness the arrival of Robert Kennedy as he tours the state to learn more the state's poverty levels. Little Ellis Earl's world spreads out wider as he sees explicit and implicit racism clearly for the first time, and experiences Robert Kennedy's presence on his very doorstep.

Jackson's writing portrays Ellis Earl in an earnest and straightforward way that hallmarks a

10-year-old's point of view. Ellis Earl and his siblings inspire giggles and tears and have the reader cheering for them from day one, and their happy ending is much deserved. Additional benefits from the novel include Ellis Earl's modeling of context clues while reading, his reading aloud to siblings, and his joy of identifying with Charlie Bucket from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl—which could serve as a paired text to the novel. *The Lucky Ones* illuminates the struggle with poverty for many in rural Mississippi during the 1960s that still affects many today. This middle-grade novel would serve as an excellent class read-aloud in school classrooms and is guaranteed to circulate well for school libraries and public libraries alike. *The Lucky Ones* is an impactful and vital story of a young Black boy's struggle with poverty, mixed with the sweet optimism of childhood that makes this book a contemporary classic worth highlighting wherever possible.

Tori L. Hopper
Children's & Teen Services
Programming Coordinator
Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System



To join MLA, or to renew your membership:

<http://misslib.org/membership>

2022 MLA Executive Board Minutes:

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