

# LETTERS FROM THE LIBRARY

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE LAW LIBRARY OF MISSISSIPPI

*"There shall be ... a library ... known as the state library"*

An Act to provide for a State Library – General Laws, 1838

April 2017

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## State Library Hours

Monday – Friday  
8am – 5pm

## Library Staff

Stephen Parks – State Librarian

Cassandra Noel – Circulation Librarian

LaTavius Jackson – Reference Librarian

Judy Reedy – Catalog Librarian

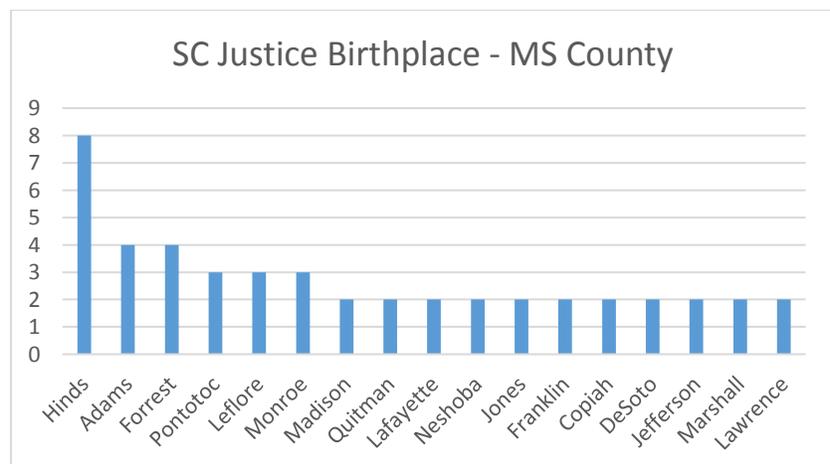
## Birthplaces of Mississippi Supreme Court Justices

by Stephen Parks

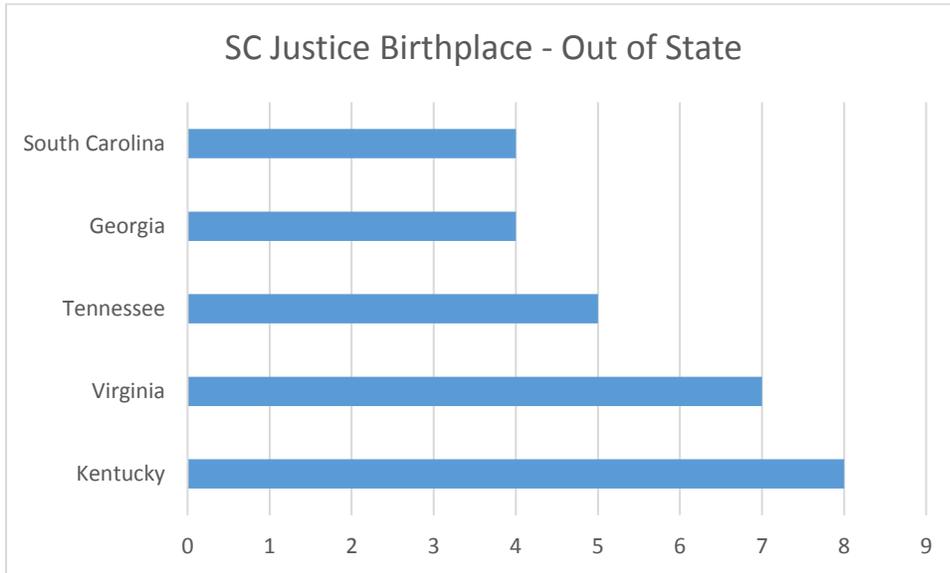
A month or so ago I was asked to do some research into Simpson County, Mississippi, specifically to see if any justices of the state supreme court were born in the county. While the answer to that specific question was 'no,' I did find that Simpson County was named after a Josiah Simpson. Simpson, born in Pennsylvania, was appointed by President Madison to be a Judge of the Mississippi Territory in 1812, reappointed in 1816, and died shortly before Mississippi Statehood in 1817.

While on the subject of justices and their places of birth, I decided to dig into it a bit further and find out exactly where the more than 120 individuals that we have had sit on the state supreme court were born. Below you will find the results.

Of the more than 120 justices that have served, we know the Mississippi County of birth for at least 75 justices. Hinds County is in the lead with 8 justices followed by Adams and Forrest Counties which are tied at 4 justices each. Many Counties can claim to have at least 1 justice born within its boundaries, but the graph below shows Counties with 2 or more justices.



Also, of the more than 120 justices that have served, 45 were born out-of-state. In the lead is Kentucky with 8 justices. Virginia is a close second with 7 justices. The graph below shows the top 5 States.



## You've got Questions – We (hopefully) have Answers

We routinely get reference questions/requests from within the Court as well as outside the Court. Here's just a sample of those requests we've received thus far in 2017:

- Governor Robert Lowry's 1844 Report to the Legislature
- Mississippi Business Corporations Act as it appeared in 2007
- Mississippi Legislature Directories from 1936 – 1940
- Proper method of citing state trial court documents
- Author of Mississippi House Bill 831 of 1980
- Definition and duties of Porters in the Mississippi House of Representatives and Senate
- Proper method of checking case law currency on Bloomberg Law's Web site
- Breakdown of appeals, civil and criminal, to the Supreme Court for the past ten years
- 2014 Report from "Virginia Open Law" which gave the state of Mississippi an "A" for its efforts in public access to court records
- Text of a Mississippi law, circa 1938, which banned items on the "black market"
- Definition of a "closely held corporation" under California's Corporations Code
- Legal definition of "general contractor"
- Lyrics to Lil Boosie's "Life after Deathrow"

**WOMEN IN POLITICS.**

**They Made a Lively Campaign For State Librarian of Mississippi.**



**MRS. HELEN D. BELL.**

The women of Mississippi have at last entered politics. They refrained for a long time, but when they did invade the arena it was with a rush. A campaign for state librarian, for which office women are eligible, recently completed, has proved the most exciting which the state has seen for many years. Mrs. Helen D. Bell, an attractive widow, carried off the prize, and is the heroine of the hour. The campaigning began early in 1895, and for a year gradually grew in intensity, until the whole state became interested in the contest. First and last there were 23 candidates. There were as many as this when the delegates to the Democratic convention were elected. In many of the counties the delegates were instructed as to which candidate should be given their influence. These communicated with their representatives, and so many of the legislators were committed to one candidate.

Several days before the assembling of the legislature the leaders in the race opened headquarters in Jackson. When the members of the legislature arrived, they were met by friends of the various candidates, who invited them to meet the fair contestants. Receptions were held at the hotels and in private residences, at which wire pulling went on with new and novel accessories. The number of ladies who wished to be librarian had by this time narrowed down to an even dozen, but there were three other ladies, each of whom hoped to be chosen as postmistress of the house. There seemed to be a great deal of harmony among the candidates. Aspirants for the same office buttonholed members and then turned them over to their opponents in the most friendly fashion.

When the climax of interest was reached with the opening of the caucus, it was found that the senatorial question had been completely overshadowed. By a unanimous vote the nomination of a senator was put over and the selecting of a state librarian was declared to be in order. Now the legislators were all gallant men, and the candidates were all fair women. Moreover, this was in Mississippi. None of those who made nominating speeches, however, excelled Mr. Jones. He began with a complimentary reference to Eve and soared gracefully down through the ages on pinions of rhetoric, winding up with a grand display of pyrotechnical eloquence, in which he declared his unbounded admiration for the whole female sex and announced that he should vote for each and every lovely candidate. The other members who made speeches were just as eloquent, but were more specific. After several days of intense excitement the balloting ended in the election of Mrs. Bell, and the whole state gradually turned its attention to other topics.

Mrs. Bell is a native Mississippian, and is a graduate of the East Mississippi Female college. For several years she has held a responsible position in the Jackson postoffice.

# Looking Back: The State Library in History

*The Aurora Daily Express, January 31, 1896*

“WOMEN IN POLITICS

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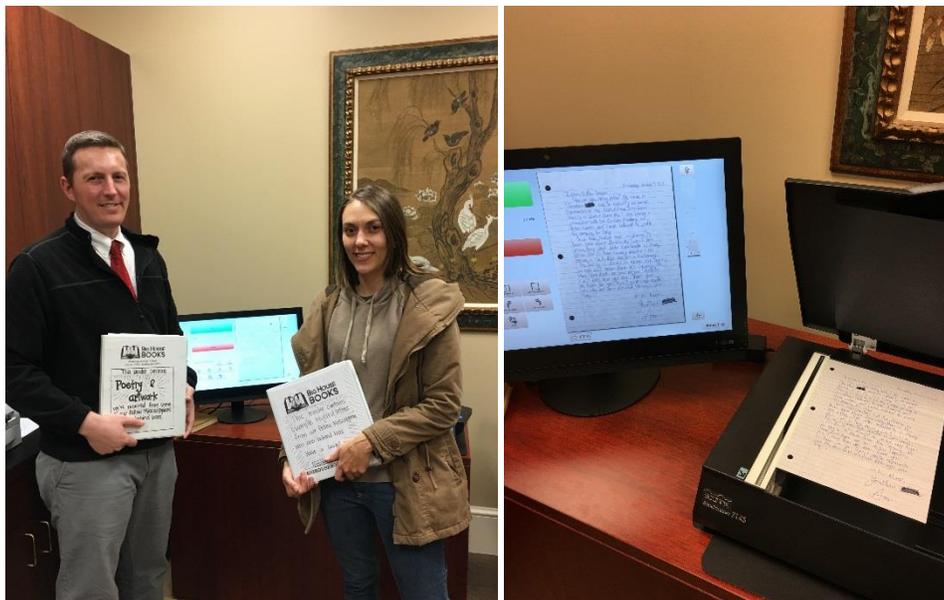
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## Library Assists “Big House Books”

Big House Books (BHB) is a non-profit, volunteer organization that sends free books to prisoners in Mississippi correctional facilities. The goal of their mission is to promote literacy and to be a vehicle for prison reform. BHB is entirely volunteer and donation-driven.

Prisoners from around the state may request up to three paperback books at a time, and volunteers with BHB do their best to fulfill those requests. Oftentimes, a prisoner will mention a specific title, but, usually, the prisoner will request certain genres. Westerns, Fantasy, and Christian Fiction are big items. Requests for composition books and word puzzle books have been on the rise recently.

Volunteers with Big House Books recently participated in a forum on criminal justice at the University of Southern Mississippi where letters from prisoners were on display. To assist with this effort, State Librarian Stephen Parks and Shelby Parsons, BHB organizer, scanned multiple letters from prisoners throughout the state of Mississippi.



If you would like to donate items, please contact Parks at [sparks@courts.ms.gov](mailto:sparks@courts.ms.gov).

# New Titles Added to the Collection

*Prosecuting and Defending Health Care Fraud Cases*, Michael K. Loucks, KF 3821 .L68 2016

*Proskauer on Privacy: A Guide to Privacy and Data Security Law in the Information Age*, Kristen J. Matthews, KF 1263 .C65 P76 2016

*Drafting Limited Liability Company Operating Agreements*, John M. Cunningham, KF 1380 .C86 2016

*Guide to State Procurement: A 50-State Primer on Purchasing Laws, Processes, and Procedures*, KF 849 .G852 2016

*Federal Income Taxation of Partners and Partnerships in a Nutshell*, Karen C. Burke, KF 6452 .Z9 B84 2017

*Art & Business: Transactions in Art & Cultural Property*, Kevin Ray, KF 4288 .R39 2016

*How Arbitration Works*, Frank Elkouri, KF 3424 .E53 2016

*The Property Tax Deskbook*, KF 2759 .Z95 A23 2016