



# NEWS

**MesaStateCollege**  
Office of Development  
1100 North Avenue  
Grand Junction, CO 81501-3122  
Phone: 970-248-1868  
Fax: 970-248-1076  
www.mesastate.edu

**For Immediate Release: March 3, 2009**

**Contact: Dana Nunn**

**970.248.1868**

**970.640.0421**

## **Visiting historian gives presentation on Liberia, race and citizenship pre-Civil War**

Grand Junction – Dr. Marie Tyler-McGraw, Historian for the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities Open Grant, "Virginia Emigrants to Liberia" web site, will give a public presentation on Thursday, March 5, at 6 pm in Room 129 of Houston Hall.

The presentation is entitled "The Hues and Uses of Liberia: American Race & Citizenship Before the Civil War".

"It's too much to put in the title, but I want to quote from Obama's bio, from his first trip to Kenya. So there will be some discussion of how 'race' gets constructed now, as well as then," Tyler-McGraw said.

As the United States grappled with slavery in the 19th century, one solution seemed to be what was called colonization--removing slaves to a completely different part of the world. This was how Liberia was founded and there was an active movement to send slaves away from Virginia and to Africa.

Mesa State College Associate Professor Dr. Sarah Swedberg said she became interested in bringing Dr. Tyler-McGraw here as she was doing research in preparation for teaching American Slavery.

"I am always looking for good, historically-accurate internet sources. I came across the website "Virginia Emigrants to Liberia" and was impressed by the website and by the questions raised, Swedberg said.

The free presentation is sponsored by MSC Lectures and Forums, the MSC Cultural Diversity Board, the MSC Social and Behavioral Sciences Department, and Phi Alpha Theta.

###

NOTE: Dr. Tyler-McGraw's resume is also attached.