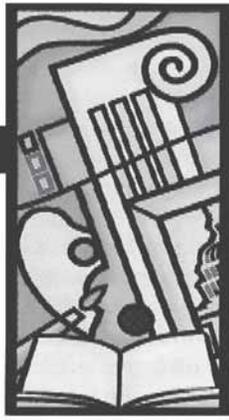


West Virginia Archives & History NEWS

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WEST VIRGINIA
DIVISION OF
CULTURE & HISTORY

From the Editor:

This issue closes the ninth volume of West Virginia Archives and History News. As we enter the tenth year of publication, I invite suggestions from you for topics to be covered and questions to be answered through this newsletter. More than a few newsletter articles have been generated in connection with Evening Workshops held in the Archives and History Library. Ideas for future workshops are welcome, also. I would like to hear from individual researchers, librarians, and historical/genealogical society members alike. Contact information will be found on the last page of the newsletter.

West Virginia Vital Research Records Project Summary and Update

The West Virginia Vital Research Records Project is a collaborative venture between the West Virginia State Archives and the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) to place online via the West Virginia Archives and History Web site selected West Virginia county birth, death and marriage records, and statewide death records in a viewable, downloadable and searchable format accessible at <http://www.wvculture.org/vrr>. The project is on-going, with more records being added when possible and the system undergoing refinement as needed. In Virginia/West Virginia, births and deaths were first reported to the counties in 1853, while marriages were recorded in the counties from the inception of each county. All three types of records are still reported to county clerks today. In 1917, the West Virginia Dept. of Health Vital Registration office began collecting the county reports of births and deaths and issuing official state death certificates. The records made

available online in the Vital Research Records database come from both sources: county records as recorded on microfilm by the GSU largely from 1967 to 1970, and statewide records as selected for release by the West Virginia Dept. of Health Vital Registration office.

State death certificates for individuals from all 55 counties dating from 1917 through 1958 are currently available online through this project. Additional death

certificates will be added in a batch once a year (usually January 1) as the certificates pass the 50-year mark of issuance. For example in 2010, the death certificates for 1959 will be added to the database. The addition of state birth certificates and of state delayed birth certificates to the database is not anticipated. (Some delayed birth records may show up in the regular county birth records.)

Continued on the next page

Archives Library Reading Room to be Refurbished

Continued refurbishing of the Archives and History Library Reading Room is anticipated over the next few months. The chairs have already been reupholstered and well-padded. Plans call for the carpet to be replaced and the room to be painted. The window blinds, original to the opening of The Cultural Center, will be replaced with ultraviolet light-filtering blinds, and

the motorized system to open and close the blinds will be either replaced or repaired. We do not know at the time of publication if these projects will necessitate any closings of the Reading Room to the public. Keep an eye on our Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org> and your local media for announcements. Especially if you are traveling to visit us, we urge you to call us before coming.

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Six counties were included in the initial database for birth, death and marriage records: Calhoun, Gilmer, Hardy, Harrison, Mineral and Pendleton. For these six counties marriage and death records are included up to the last record microfilmed for that county by GSU: Calhoun, Gilmer, and Mineral through 1969; Hardy, Harrison and Pendleton through 1970. For these six counties birth records are included up through 1930, only records 75 years or older at the time posted online. Due to a change in the selection parameters since the initial records were posted, subsequent counties added include only births recorded in those counties more than 100 years ago, meaning currently only births for 1853 through 1908 will be made available, with additional births added sometime after the records pass the 100-year mark, usually January 1 of the following year.

The records are not fully transcribed and are searchable only by the information requested in the search boxes for each type of record. The county records are double-paged records, as they were microfilmed, so if the record you want is not visible on the first page shown on the screen, scroll right or left to the adjacent page to find your record. We are aware that the images are oversized and that a user must scroll up and down, left and right, to view the entire record. We have been unable to determine any way to improve them. Before notifying the Archives of any problem encountered in downloading and printing, please fully explore your options on your

own computer first.

Regarding West Virginia state death certificates, a group of 1920 death certificates, #4501 through #5000, are not available. Sometime after the deaths for 1920 were indexed, but before the record books themselves were transferred to the State Archives, that certificate book was lost. The names of the persons and the certificate numbers were entered into the Vital Research Records database, but there will be no accompanying images. Although the Dept. of Health and the State Archives do not have copies of these particular death certificates, the relevant county courthouses should be able to provide them. The Archives and History Library has county records on microfilm for the use of its patrons, and also can provide copies by mail in response to mailed research requests that enclose the required \$5.00 fee for in-state requests, or the \$15.00 fee for out-of-state requests. (Please note that only the county that issued the certificate can provide a certified copy for legal purposes.)

You may notice some dates earlier than 1853 for county births and deaths. These are either delayed records accepted by the clerks, or are errors by an original clerk or by a transcriber. You may also disagree with the spelling of a name as entered or as transcribed. We have been correcting transcription errors of all types as we find them; however, we cannot correct errors in the original records, only errors made in the transcription and indexing process. To correct errors in the original information recorded by a county clerk or by the Dept. of Health, researchers must contact the relevant agency. To report transcription errors, indexing errors or broken links, send an e-mail identifying the problem to wvrr@wvculture.org. Due to staff time

limitations, please do not telephone Archives and History with questions about Vital Research Records, and please do not make research requests to the WVRR e-mail address. For instance, if a researcher does not find a record as expected, and would like the staff of the Archives to conduct further research to locate that record, or a substitute source such as a census record or an obituary, a written research request letter is required. Research requests must be sent in writing by regular mail, with the proper fee enclosed, to the West Virginia Archives and History Library (address and details posted at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/>)

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10th Annual Hoot Owl Night

For the 10th year, the Mining Your History Foundation and West Virginia Archives and History are sponsoring Hoot Owl Night at the West Virginia State Archives. Stay up all night, researching and networking in the West Virginia Archives and History Library from 6:00 p.m., Friday, April 24, to 8:00 a.m., Saturday, April 25. Well-known West Virginia genealogists will be on hand to offer help and guidance. Tours behind the scenes of the State Archives will be given. Participation is limited to 50. Registration is \$25.00 by check or money order payable to Mining Your History Foundation, postmarked by April 10, with a late registration fee of \$35.00, if space is available. For more information about Hoot Owl Night, contact Joe Geiger, (304) 558-0230, joe.geiger@wvculture.org, or Wes Cochran, (304) 422-1774, wescochran@juno.com. For more information about Mining Your History Foundation, visit <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~myhf/> or call Wes Cochran.

Archives and History News
is available on the
Archives and History Web site
<http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/ahnews.html>

services.html). The West Virginia State Archives cannot provide certified copies of any of these records. For certified copies of records, most often needed for legal purposes, contact the issuing agency, either the county clerk or the West Virginia Dept. of Health Vital Registration Office, (304) 558-9100 or <http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/hsc/vr/birtcert.htm>.

To date there is no definitive schedule for adding the remaining counties to the database, but we expect them to be added in 2009. Preparations are continuing for subsequent batches, until records for all 55 counties have been added to the database. The counties yet to be added are: Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Brooke, Doddridge, Fayette, Hancock, Kanawha, Marion, Mason, Mercer, Ohio and Tyler. Because new data will be added in increments, all three categories of records of a single county may not be added at once, nor for example, will all births for all counties in a new group be added at the same time. Note that while records of the initial six

counties currently online cover births from 1853 to 1930, subsequent county records will withhold births less than 100 years old (in 2009, only births through 1908 will appear, etc.). Please check the site periodically for new additions, and watch for announcements in *West Virginia Archives and History News*, available online at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/ahnews.html>. Archives and History does not have the capability of maintaining a mailing list or of e-mailing individuals with updates to the records.

The Vital Research Records database has been one of the most well-received projects we have undertaken, and is probably the most used portion of our Web site. We ask for your patience if the system times out on you by reporting "Records found," but listing none. Try making your search less specific, or try again at a less busy time. The image server and the database server will be upgraded in the near future in order to improve service. While there are limitations and restrictions

pertaining to both the contents and the use of the Vital Research Records Project database, we are offering these records online as a public service to family history researchers. We think the ability of researchers to view digitized photographic images of the actual records rather than typed transcriptions is very important and contributes to increased accuracy in family history research. Please continue to send us your comments, suggestions and corrections for the database to our special e-mail address for the site, wvrr@wvculture.org. If you do not have access to e-mail, call the Archives and History Library, (304) 558-0230.

For greater understanding of West Virginia's vital records, we refer you to articles in our monthly newsletter and Quick Guides derived from those articles:

- **Vital Records in West Virginia: Deaths**, *West Virginia Archives and History News*, September 2007: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/0907news.pdf>
- **Vital Records in West Virginia: Births**, *West Virginia Archives and History News*, October 2007: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/1007news.pdf>
- **Vital Records in West Virginia: Marriages**, *West Virginia Archives and History News*, November 2007: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/1107news.pdf>
- **Quick Guide to West Virginia Birth Records**: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/quickguidetobirth.pdf>
- **Quick Guide to West Virginia Death Records**: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/quickguidetodeath.pdf>

Board of Public Works Minute Book Presented to State Archives

On January 9, Secretary of State Betty Ireland presented the West Virginia State Archives with the newly conserved first volume of the minutes of the Board of Public Works containing minutes from the formation of the state in 1863 through November 10, 1871. The first entry in the volume is from September 24, 1863, and contains the act creating the Board of Public Works. The book also contains 49 pages of notes and specifications on the construction of the 1885 capitol in Charleston, which burned in 1921. With receipt of this volume, the State Archives now has the minutes of the board through 1961.

The volume was sent to Etherington Conservation Services' Midwest facility, located in North Manchester, Indiana, for needed conservation work. The original binding and cover were repaired to preserve the book, and copies were made from digital images to allow for the creation of user copies for the Secretary of State's office and for patrons of the Archives and History Library. The original volume will be preserved in a customized box in the State Archives.

Adapted from January 8 West Virginia Division of Culture and History press release.

- **Quick Guide to West Virginia Marriage Records:** <http://www.wvculture.org/history/quickguidetomarrriage.pdf>

Organizations, societies and teacher are free to copy the Vital Records articles, the Quick Guides and this WVRR article for use as handouts or for reprint in other publications, as long as each Guide is printed in full with the statement of origin that appears at the bottom, and as long as the reprint is not used for commercial purposes.

Cecil H. Underwood Collections

The finding aids for the **Cecil H. Underwood Collection** and the **Cecil H. Underwood Photograph Collection**, consisting of private and first-term gubernatorial papers and photographs, and the **Cecil H. Underwood Photograph Collection (Second Term)** are now available online through the Archives and History Web site. Visit the Archives and History homepage at <http://www.wvculture.org/history> for links to these collection listings. These three finding aids join the one that already existed for Underwood's second-term papers (Ar1912), which is available at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ar1912.html>. By the way, if you come into the Archives and History Library to view the actual photographs, and you can identify a person or the occasion of a photograph that we have been unable to determine, please share the information with our staff.

Preserve America Mini Grants

Applications are now being accepted for Preserve America mini grants through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

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History Day at the Legislature on March 5

History Day at the Legislature 2009 is Thursday, March 5, with events taking place in The Cultural Center and the State Capitol in Charleston. We urge everyone to attend to learn more about the history of West Virginia people and places, as displayed by historical, genealogical and preservation societies, as well as various museums, state agencies and others dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of West Virginia's history and culture. History Heroes will be honored in the Norman L. Fagan State Theater in the Cultural Center in the morning, and display tables representing history-related organizations will be placed throughout the upper level of the Capitol and will be manned from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. History Day's events are free and open to the public. No registration is necessary to attend. Homeschoolers are warmly welcomed and are encouraged to interact with the re-enactors of historical

figures who will be present.

For those groups hesitating to present themselves without full blown displays, we remind you that the main purpose is to communicate with and educate the members of the Legislature, the public and fellow historians and history buffs regarding the significance of the area and/or topic you represent. All you need are people willing to greet the public, answer questions about your organization, and perhaps pass out a few brochures. Self-published tri-fold brochures on copy paper or copies of your latest newsletter are fine. A tablecloth and a bowl of candy will dress up the table and draw folks over to talk. The deadline for registration for table space is February 13. A few spaces are still available, although electrical outlets and wireless Internet connection may no longer be available to later registrants. For more information, call West Virginia Archives and History, (304) 558-0230.

New Titles

- Barshingers in America:** Stephen Smith, 2007.
- Better Take Two Guns: The N&W's Special Agents (Railroad Detectives) and Their W. Va. Cases:** Jack L. and Kay Stamper Dickinson, 2008.
- Bridgeport:** Robert Stealey, 2007.
- Civil War Veterans of Lincoln County:** Harold Smith, 2007.
- Estimating Selected Streamflow: Statistics Representative of 1930-2002 in West Virginia:** Jeffrey Wiley, 2008.
- Fascinating West Virginia:** James A. Haught, 2008.
- From Coal Fields to Oil Fields:** Sylvester Myers, 2007.
- From West Virginia with Love:** Andrew Chafin, 2007.
- Fundamentals of Fire Fighting Tactics:** Lloyd Layman, Parkersburg Fire Dept., 1940.
- Growing Up in Nitro:** Keith Estep, 2006.
- Growing Up on the Hardwood:** Jarrod West, 2006.
- Harlan Miners Speak:** 2008.
- Historic Inns of Southern West Virginia:** Ed Robinson, 2007.
- Jackson County:** Michael Poe, 2008.
- Jewish Communities on the Ohio River, A History:** Amy Shevitz, 2007.
- Pagans in the Promised Land:** Steven Newcomb, 2008.
- Parsons Pioneers:** Darlene Parsons, 2007.
- Point Pleasant:** Jason Bolte, 2007.

Calendar of Events

Please check our web site (<http://www.wvculture.org/history>) for genealogical and historical society meeting announcements, and for more complete information on activities listed below.

“JOHN HENRY: THE STEEL DRIVIN’ MAN” EXHIBIT, February 4-25:
 Moomau Library Arts Center, Petersburg.

“ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN MEMORY AND REMEMBRANCE ON HIS 200TH BIRTHDAY,” February 12: Dr. Mark A. Snell, speaker,
 Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater, The Cultural Center, Charleston.

HISTORY DAY EXHIBIT/TABLE REGISTRATION DEADLINE, February 13: Postmarked or hand-delivered.

PRESIDENTS DAY, February 16: Archives Library will be open*.

LIBRARY DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE, March 3: The West Virginia State Capitol and The Cultural Center, Charleston.

HISTORY DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE, March 5: The West Virginia State Capitol and The Cultural Center, Charleston.

GENEALOGY FAIR, KANAWHA VALLEY HISTORY CENTER, April 4: Rand.
 For more information call (304) 542-3817 or (304) 925-2438, or e-mail kvhc06@yahoo.com.

HOOT OWL NIGHT, April 24-25: Sponsored by Mining Your History Foundation and West Virginia Archives and History, Archives and History Library, The Cultural Center, Charleston.

**Only the Archives Library will be staffed—all other Archives offices will be closed.*

The West Virginia Library Commission Library in the Cultural Center is closed weekends and all holidays.

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Approximately \$24,000 will be available for grant awards on a 50/50 matching basis. Applications must be postmarked April or sooner. For more information about the Preserve America mini grant program, visit SHPO’s Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org/shpo>, or contact Pamela Brooks, SHPO grants coordinator, (304) 558-0240, ext. 740.

Genealogy Fair News

We previously reported that the West Virginia Genealogical Society would not be hosting its annual genealogy fair in May, but now we have been told a final decision will be made during their February meeting.

West Virginia Vital Registration Fee now \$12.00

As of January 15, 2009, the fee for a certified birth, death or marriage certificate from the West Virginia Dept. of Health Vital Registration office is now \$12.00. For more information regarding certified state vital records, call (304) 558-9100, or visit <http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/hsc/vr/birtcert.htm>. The Quick Guides to births, deaths and

marriages posted as Research Guides on the Archives and History Web site (<http://www.wvculture.org/history/wvsamenu.html>) have been updated to reflect the change. If you have been distributing copies of the Quick Guides through your library or organization, please print out the revised guides.

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West Virginia
Archives & History
NEWS



We would love to hear from you.

Let us know what you find helpful in the newsletter, and what new topics you would like covered.

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