

West Virginia Archives & History NEWS

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WEST VIRGINIA
DIVISION OF
CULTURE & HISTORY

From the Editor:

The West Virginia Archives and History Library and the West Virginia Library Commission Library are currently working together to determine our needs for a new Integrated Library System (ILS). In addition to in-house tasks such as purchase of new materials, circulation of materials, and cataloging, an ILS includes an online public access catalog (OPAC) of the library's cataloged holdings. Although the Archives and History Library will remain a non-circulating library, we hope to be able to offer our patrons a more user friendly, highly efficient means of searching our cataloged collections, along with other helpful research aids. We will keep you informed as the process progresses.

The Importance of Documentation and Accuracy in Family History Research

Recent exchanges in *RootsWeb Review* among family historians over accuracy and documentation of information included in genealogy charts and family history compositions, particularly those posted online, are summarized in the following major points of contention:

- Understanding that it is not whether our information is correct (even primary official records contain incorrect information), but recording where we obtained our information, and not being defensive when someone questions where we got it.
- Whether or not to share and/or publish our trees as we go (with or without including our sources) or wait until it is 100% accurate.
- Mistakenly thinking we "own" our ancestors and genealogical facts pertaining to them and can claim copyright to discovery of same.
- That being related somehow is a prerequisite to compiling a

family's genealogy or in obtaining any information about the family.

- Being unreceptive or hostile to learning how to create a quality family tree to leave for our families—one like a fine piece of furniture that will be a treasure to pass down for generations.

The following Web sites were

cited for further information on why and how to properly document family history research:

- Why Bother? The Value of Documentation in Family History Research: http://www.genealogy.com/genealogy/19_kory.html?Welcome=988300764

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Records Management and Preservation Board Awards Grants

The Records Management and Preservation Board (RMPB) has awarded \$330,480 in grants to seventeen West Virginia county commissions through the County Records Management and Preservation Grants program. The grants, ranging from \$7,230 to \$53,000, are for projects that will introduce improved management and storage conditions for the counties' official public records. The projects will be conducted during the fiscal year July 2005 through June 2006.

The RMPB encouraged grant applicants to address three criteria: removal of non-records and of accumulations of records having reached or exceeded required retention period; provision of proper and improved storage of permanent or long-term records; and total records inventory and condition reassessment, including development of a master records management plan.

The County Records Management and Preservation Grants

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- A Cite for Sore Eyes—Quality Citations for Electronic Genealogy Sources: <http://www.oz.net/~markhow/writing/cite.htm>
- Creating Worthwhile Genealogies for our Families and Descendants: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/lesson12.htm>

This information appeared in *RootsWeb Review*, Volume 8, Number 23, June 8, 2005. This e-zine is available by free subscription and back issues can be read at <http://www.petuniapress.com>. **Editor's Note:** The staff members of the West Virginia Archives and History Library always encourage researchers to record the exact source of the information they locate. We believe this so firmly that when making photocopies for you we always give a copy of the title page free of charge so that you will know exactly where the material came from.

West Virginia Catholic Heritage Center

The West Virginia Catholic Heritage Center, located in the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Wheeling–Charleston in Wheeling, WV, is now open to the public. Hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Other days and times are available by appointment. Visit their Web site at <http://www.dwc.org/chancery/archives.shtml>. Their mission statement is as follows: *The West Virginia Catholic Heritage Center exists as a resource for educating and enriching the public about the state's Catholic heritage through exhibits, special programs, outreach activities, access to historical records, and promoting historical research.* The archivist is Ms. Tracey Rasmer, who may be reached at trasmer@dwc.org, or (304) 230-2079.

This and other known church archives in West Virginia are listed

on the *Historical, Genealogical and Preservation Societies* list on our Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/histsocs.html> in the "State Archives" section. If you would like

Historical, Genealogical and Preservation Societies List Update

Archives and History has maintained a list of historical, genealogical, and preservation societies for a number of years. The list includes the society's mailing address, as well as the names of the president and secretary (and/or other person to whom correspondence should be sent). We make this list available to the public through our Web site (<http://www.wvculture.org/history/histsocs.html>), our history journal *West Virginia History*, and in the Archives and History Library. We also provide information to the Senate clerk's office for use in the annual *West Virginia Blue Book*.

Archives and History makes use of this list when sending mailings about activities to the societies. Perhaps the most important of these activities is the annual History Day at the Legislature, when local groups come together at the State Capitol in recognition of the state's history. The list forms the basis for the mailing of information on this event, including time-sensitive instructions for nominating a History Hero and reserving display space. We want as many groups as possible to participate in History Day, but, if our information is inaccurate, they may not receive information in time to nominate history heroes or reserve space.

Although we try to keep the list as current as possible, in the last two years we have made a special effort to update the list, realizing that our information on some societies was no longer valid. We have sent letters, and, when some of those came back as undeliverable, tried other avenues.

to recommend a church archive or library to be considered for addition to the list, please contact Susan Scouras, susan.scouras@wvculture.org or (304) 558-0230, Ext. 742.

A few times we were nearly ready to give up when a phone call to someone's home in the evening gave us the answer we needed. To those of you who have replied to our inquiries in the past two years, thank you. With your help, we have made numerous changes to our list, updating officers and/or addresses. Moreover, we have added the names of several societies to the list and deleted the names of a few that have become inactive. Unfortunately, there are a small number of societies that we have yet to reach.

In order for us to maintain the most up-to-date information possible, each year we will contact the societies on our list. In the next few weeks, once again we will be sending letters or e-mails to the society secretary, president, or other officer to confirm or update our information, and we will try to uncover information on the few societies that we have failed to reach in the last two years. Updates should be sent to Mary Johnson, who can be contacted by e-mail at mary.johnson@wvculture.org; phone at (304) 558-0230, ext. 133; or by mail at Archives and History.

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 fees collected by county clerks. The funds serve as monetary incentives to equip county officials to improve conditions for the preservation of their public records. The RMPB was created by the West Virginia Legislature in 2000 to develop guidelines and provide technical assistance to address the needs of the records of county governments through a

"Born of Rebellion: West Virginia Statehood" Exhibit

The West Virginia Humanities Council debuted a new traveling exhibit on West Virginia Day 2005, "Born of Rebellion: West Virginia Statehood," highlighting the unique circumstances and still-debated constitutional issues associated with creation of the state of West Virginia in 1863. With the help of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History and other scholars, the Humanities Council developed the historical content for the exhibit, while West Virginia University graphic design students of professor Eve Faulkes developed its design. Divergence, Civil War, Birth of West Virginia, and Statehood are the four sections of the exhibit, which is available for loan to interested groups. For more information visit <http://www.wvhumanities.org/> or contact Mark Payne, West Virginia Humanities Council, (304) 346-8500, payne@wvhumanities.org.

Web Site of Interest

Sources for locating "black sheep" ancestors are featured for Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States (prison, convict, execution and court records) at <http://blacksheepancestors.com>. Biographies of pirates and buccaniers are included as well.

uniform records management system, and to further encourage adoption of these goals throughout the county records grant program. The RMPB also funded a statewide survey of county government records and conditions in 2002-03, issued a county records manual in 2003 and sponsors records management workshops for county officials.

For a complete list of grant recipients and for more information about the RMPB annual grant

program, visit the RMPB section of the West Virginia Archives and History Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/rmpb/rmpb.html>. You may also contact Fredrick H. Armstrong, Director of Archives and History, by phone at (304) 558-0230, Ext. 164, or by e-mail at fharmstrong@wvculture.org. You may write to: Records Management and Preservation Board, WVDCH, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

Conference on Early American Genealogical Research

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) will be hosting a genealogical conference entitled *Conference on Early American Genealogical Research* at NSDAR headquarters in Washington, DC, October 15-16, 2005. The event is open to all interested genealogists, and will focus not just on NSDAR, but

on records and methodology for researching the Colonial period of American history, through 1860. More information is available on their Web site at www.dar.org (click on Genealogy), including an online version of the conference brochure and registration form.

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.

INDEPENDENCE DAY, July 4: Archives Library will be *closed*.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING, August 9: Mountaineer Resort, Chester.

LABOR DAY, September 5: Archives Library will be *closed*.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY COMMISSION MEETING, October 7: Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington.

COLUMBUS DAY, October 10: Archives Library will be open.*

MINING YOUR HISTORY FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOP, November 5:
 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.



Archives and History Staff

- Fredrick Armstrong Director
- Debra Basham Archivist (photographs, special collections)
- Constance Baston Researcher (Veterans Memorial Archives)
- Greg Carroll Historian (Civil War, Native American history)
- Dick Fauss Archivist (microfilm and moving images collection)
- Allen Fowler Special projects
- Elaine Gates Library Assistant (microfilming and microfilm repairs)
- Joe Geiger Assistant Director (Historian, Web page)
- Ed Hicks Photographer (archival photography, darkroom)
- Mary Johnson Historian (*West Virginia History*)
- Terry Lowry Library Assistant (Civil War)
- Cathy Miller Library Assistant (WV State documents, periodicals)
- Sharon Newhouse Secretary
- Harold Newman Library Assistant (microfilming, Revolutionary War)
- Pat Pleska Manager of the Veterans Memorial Archives
- Susan Scouras Librarian (cataloging, Kentucky, library collection, newsletter editor)
- Jaime Simmons Library Assistant (records of the 1700's and early 1800's, Pennsylvania)
- Bobby Taylor Library Manager
- Nancy Waggoner Secretary
- Intern Shari Haywood
- Volunteers Carolyn Conner, Bill Kelley, Angela Tolbert, Bob and Lucile Foster,
John McClure, Carol de la Riva, Lorene Mullins, and Kellis and Virginia Gillespie

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Troy O. Body, Commissioner