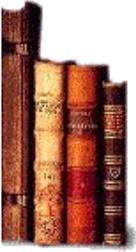


# West Virginia Archives & History News



VOLUME I, NO. 9

NOVEMBER 2000

## HISTORY'S ROLE IN GENEALOGY

### From the Editor:

*By Susan Scouras*

If you spend time with family during the upcoming holidays, I urge you to go beyond sharing the new branches of the family tree that you have discovered since last year, and to talk about more recent generations as well. Share stories that were told to you by your grandparents. Why did one branch of the family leave West Virginia? What were the occupations of your grandparents? Tell them about Great-aunt Mary who was the first woman in the family to graduate from college, and about Uncle Joe who died overseas during WWI. Tell about Grandma and how she kept the family fed all through the Depression with the fresh produce from her vegetable garden in the summer, and her home-canned food during the winter. Ask lots of questions of any older persons who are willing to talk to you about the world of their youth. What are the youngsters doing now that will be the family tales in the future? Pass on the stories you have heard, especially if the folks who told you the story are no longer around. For example, when my father was a toddler he was taken to visit a neighbor who had a brand new chalkware doorstep made in the image of a giant green frog. The poor child was terrified of it, grabbed a poker, smashed it to smithereens, then announced to his horrified mother: "I killed the fwog"! I am the one who now tells that 65-year-old story to the smallest family members.

*Happy Holidays!*

**HISTORY AND GENEALOGY**

A family tree need not be ink on paper made from dead wood—it should be green and vital, ever-growing with new branches, each with its own stories. Knowledge of the times in which your ancestors lived is not only fascinating and enriching, but can provide helpful clues to tracing your ancestors and understanding why they may have lived as they did. Most of us have at least a vague idea of why our ancestors immigrated to the colonies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, or to the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Reading a little history of the area in the world from which your ancestors came may tell you exactly why they left there in hopes of a better life. Once settled in America, why did great-grandpa haul the family all over West Virginia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century? If you study the history of the counties he lived in through those decades, coupled with his occupation as listed in a census or other document, you may discover that he was moving for work, either in logging or in mining.

You may have learned from family stories that your ancestor was a glass blower from Belgium who came in the 1870's, but you can't find him in the records of the county where your family has lived for a couple of generations. You can't find him in a census Soundex. Where would you start looking for him? A West Virginia history book will direct you toward Wheeling and Ohio County, where the glass industry was thriving in the 1870's

and attracting significant numbers of immigrants who were skilled glassworkers.

From the opposite viewpoint, you are stuck on an ancestor who turns up in Wheeling in the 1790's. Where did he come from? Maybe there are two other families with different surnames, but whose children have the same first names as in your line. Are they related? Check out Revolutionary War service records. If your ancestor served, where did his unit originate and where did he actually serve? Many who ended up in Wheeling would have come from the Potomac watershed. Most men in the unit would have been related by blood or by marriage because they would have come from the same community. During this time period many of these other relatives will turn up with your ancestor in Wheeling, while others will be found in Louisville, KY or in extreme western Virginia on their way to Tennessee. Knowing the migration patterns is very important, from colonial times up through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Take a fresh look at what you know about your family. Read all the odd bits of paper tucked in with the family photographs and documents. Re-read the documents with an open mind for clues that you didn't pick up the first time. Check out the background in those family portraits, not just the faces. Look beyond the dry words of deeds and wonder what the exchange of land meant in the lives of the people involved. To use a current catchphrase, "think out of the box" of modern American life, and try to imagine the world in which your ancestor lived. What can you learn about them beyond dates and names?

In my own family, I was able to piece together a wonderful view of extended family life in a hollow in eastern Kentucky. The patriarch of this branch gave each of his sons a section of his land, thus keeping them all close. Newlyweds were offered a small cabin near the big homeplace as their first home. The cabin was known as "The Weaning Pen" and was the birthplace of firstborn children to several couples who lived there, with "Little Granny" nearby to help. Although most of the

men gave their occupations as carpenter or builder, and were known to have built many houses, commercial establishments and government buildings, a study of a boxful of receipts turned up many barge tickets and bills of sale showing they were also farmers. Every year they shipped wheat and corn on the river to the mills, and received bags of flour and meal for their own use. Blacksmith's receipts for repairs to plows and other farm implements, as well as photographs of harnessed mules, provide further evidence of farming.

One adult son did not list an occupation for the census, and always resided in his parents' household. I found this very curious in a hard-working family. Also, this was the only one of the "boys" about whom I had never heard any stories. I knew he was well-regarded in the family, and that one of his nephews was named for him. I asked my grandfather about his uncle, and learned that the young man had been injured in a slate fall while picking coal in the small mine on family property. He had lived another fifteen years, but never fully recovered from his injuries. I not only learned the story of this family member, I learned another way in which this clan maintained their self-sufficiency—they mined their own "kitchen coal" and did not need to purchase fuel for heating and cooking.

Keeping in mind your unanswered questions about your family line, consider the questions *your* descendants may ask about *you*. Think about the 2000 census short form used this year. Seventy-two years from now will your descendants learn as much about you from census records as you have been able to learn about your ancestors from the censuses of 1880 through 1920? Write down the reasons behind family moves and occupation changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to encourage understanding of your generation. Tell how your family was affected by major events and trends in the past century: wars, the Great Depression, the post-World War II economic boom and increasing urbanization of America, the mechanization of the coal industry, increased educational opportunities,

the move of women into the workplace, etc. With all of this in mind, read the following magazine review and excerpts of two articles from that issue that also stress the importance of history to genealogy.

## MAGAZINE REVIEW

### *Family Chronicle: The Magazine for Families Researching their Roots, Nov./Dec. 2000*

*Family Chronicle* is a genealogy magazine published six times a year by Moorshead Magazines. The November/December 2000 issue has many useful articles that both the beginning and the experienced family history researcher will find valuable. Articles of particular interest, as described in the table of contents:

- *Reading the Omens*: Barbara Krasner-Hhait examines a key to genealogical breakthroughs.
- *Footnotes Lead to Sources*: John Philip Colletta offers advice on how to use footnotes to break through brick walls.
- *Railroad Records*: Holly Hansen describes the wealth of records that may be found in railroad archives.
- *Getting Past the Brickwall*: Ron Wild shares a selection of stories from genealogists who managed to overcome seemingly unsurmountable research obstacles. **[Editor's Note: The magazine is collecting these stories from readers to be combined into an indexed and cross-referenced research manual. Anyone submitting their problem-solving experiences will receive a discount coupon for purchase of the completed book.]**
- *Becoming a Genealogical Detective*: Robert W. Marlin recounts how he used detective skills to find his roots.
- *10 Frequently Asked Questions at Family History Centers*: Ron Wild answers the

questions most commonly asked of volunteers at Family History Centers.

- *Keeping a Journal*: Ed Clauser recommends genealogists do their descendents a favor and keep a journal.

You can read *Family Chronicle* in the Archives and History Library. Here are some excerpts from two articles in this issue regarding the relationship of genealogy to history.

### Research Techniques, by John Philip Colletta: Footnotes Lead to Sources

“Genealogists know the importance of reading history. Learning about the times when ancestors lived, and the places where they made their homes, helps family historians to understand the informational content of records created during those times in those places. Familiarity with the historical context—the local topography, economy, culture, religions, dialects, foods and politics—answers many a question raised in the old records, and allows genealogists to understand the biographical facts of their ancestors as events that were really lived in a real physical place at a real moment in time.”

“Historians and genealogists, to a large extent, use the same sources. . . [o]nly they have different objectives. Historians seek to extract the broad picture, the general sweep of society, whereas genealogists seek to extract the facts pertaining to a specific individual. Therefore, taking note of the sources cited by historians may lead genealogists to records they might never think of otherwise, records that may not only provide information about a particular ancestor, but even, in some cases, solve research problems that seemed insoluble.”

“It is important for genealogists to read history: 1) to gain an appreciation for the times and places in which their ancestors lived; 2) to be able to interpret more accurately the words and phrases they encounter in the records created in those times and places; and 3) for the footnotes!”

**Research Techniques, by Robert W. Marlin:  
Becoming a Genealogical Detective**

“One of the most appealing aspects of my genealogical research has been the opportunity to play detective. At times I think of myself as a modern-day Sherlock Holmes, using my own deductive reasoning to get into the minds of my long-dead ancestors. To me, genealogy is more than collecting a group of documents and filing them away in a trunk. My insatiable curiosity drives me to want to understand everything I can uncover about the people who are responsible for my very existence. I want to know who they were and what they were, as well as how, when and why they lived the lives they did. For example, a quick look into the political or economic situation where your ancestors came from might tell you why they came to America when they did. They might have been fleeing famine, war or political or religious persecution. Using your imagination might even help to locate documents that tell the story of what your ancestor went through to get here.”

“... even with all the information that is currently available through computers, one aspect of genealogical research has remained the same. . . the ability to think creatively and consider ideas that you can not prove. . . This ability is not something that you can learn in school or on the Internet. However, developing you[r] creative ability will allow you to take the information available in the documents you uncover online and creatively use it to uncover more facts about your family history. This creative ability is not something that is normally apparent to newcomers. It is a skill that develops over a period of time.”

**[Editor’s Note: You can read these articles in full at the Archives Library.]**

### **DONATIONS**

Thank you to **Robert E. Enoch** and the **Wood County Historical Society** for donating a dozen of their publications. Most of these are reprints of older local publications or collections of

newspaper articles that would not be accessible to Archives Library patrons, particularly our out-of-state genealogists and historians. By donating copies to the Archives and History Library, Wood County Historical Society has adhered to the goal of all such groups: ensuring that the rich history of their county is remembered and appreciated.

**Jean Thomas** has again donated several wonderful West Virginia-related books that she found at sales. Keep hunting, Jean! We appreciate your good eye for items that belong in the West Virginia Archives and History Library.

Our own **Harold Newman** has donated the most recent edition of Everton’s Handy Book for Genealogist, Wild Sweet Notes, Women of the American Revolution, Terrapin Park: A History, and The Hero of Greenland Gap.

## **ARCHIVES AND HISTORY MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO “ASHES TO GLORY”**

“Ashes to Glory,” a two-hour documentary exploring the immediate effect and long-term impact of the 1970 airplane crash in Huntington that took the lives of 75 Marshall University football players, fans, staff and journalists, is being shown this month on West Virginia Public Television. In recognition of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragedy, several film productions (including an ESPN documentary) and numerous print articles have used the resources of the West Virginia Archives in compiling their images and information. Richard (Dick) Fauss, Archivist, worked with them in providing the many film clips of Marshall games before and after the accident, and of news coverage at the time. For “Ashes to Glory” Dick also shared his technical expertise with the production team in preparation of materials and transfer of film to videotape.

Watchers will see that Archives and History, its director, Fredrick H. Armstrong, and Richard Fauss are mentioned in the credits, along with

Michael Keller, Division of Culture and History photographer.

Dick has also been answering requests for archived film reports on the "Mothman"! As we have said before, the public sees the results of our efforts all the time, just not always with our name attached.

## NEW TITLE LIST

**TITLE:** *AUTHOR, PUBLICATION DATE.*

**The Murder of Abram Deem: The Trial, Conviction and Execution of the Murderers, with a Memoir and Confession of Mortimer W. Gibbony:** C. E. Douglas, Undated reprint of 1957 edition.

**The History of "Long Tom": (The Civil War Cannon):** Romie L. and Eleanor Kirk, 1999.

**The "Quakertown" Series: Describing the Life and Families of Early Lubeck District, Wood County:** Undated reprints of articles published in the Parkersburg Daily State Journal, 1887.

**A Brief History of Marrrtown, Located Near Parkersburg, West Virginia:** pamphlet, no date.  
**Wood County, Built Around a City:** R. E. Enoch, 1999.

**Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789, Volume 25:** Paul H. Smith, Editor, 1999.

**The Papers of James Madison: Presidential Series, Volume 4:** Robert A. Rutland, Editor, 1999.

**Papers: Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826, Volume 28:** Julian P. Boyd, Editor, 1999.

**The Coalwood Way:** Homer Hickam, 2000.

**West Virginia Atlas & Gazetteer:** DeLorme Mapping Co., c1997. Note: "Topographic maps of the entire state: back roads, outdoor recreation."

**A Full Blown Yankee of the Iron Brigade: Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers:** Rufus R. Dawes, 1999 reprint of the 1890 edition.

**Chickamauga: A Battlefield Guide:** Steven E. Woodworth, 1999.

**Gettysburg: A Battlefield Guide:** Mark Grimsley and Brooks D. Simpson, 1999.

**Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley:** Elizabeth A. Perkins, 1998.

**Fighting Joe Hooker:** Walter H. Hebert, 1999 reprint of 1944 edition.

**The Only Land They Knew: American Indians in the Old South:** James Leitch Wright, 1999 reprint of the 1981 edition.

**Spoilsmen in a "Flowery Fairyland": The Development of the U.S. Legation in Japan, 1859-1906:** Jack L. Hammersmith, 1998.

**Kentucky Cavaliers in Dixie: Reminiscences of a Confederate Cavalryman:** George Dallas Mosgrove, Originally published in 1895, reprinted in 1957, this edition 1999.

**The General & the Texas: A Pictorial History of the Andrews Raid, April 12, 1862:** Stan Cohen and James G. Bogle, 1999.

**64 Kanawha Co., WV Cemeteries: Volume 2:** West Virginia Genealogical Society, no date.

**The Hess's Then & Now:** Betty Hess Hofman, 1992.

**The Germans in the American Civil War:** Wilhelm Kaufmann, 1999. Originally published in German in 1911.

**Rockbridge County, Virginia, Manuscripts: A Guide to Collections in the United States:** Charles A. Bodie, Editor, 1998.

**Marriage Bonds of Franklin County, Virginia, 1786-1858:** Marshall Wingfield, 1973, new edition to replace the 1939 volume.

**Portraits of Power: The Men & Women of the New AEP:** AEP, 2000.

**Flemington, West Virginia District History: We Were We Are, Volume III:** Geneva M. Phelps, 2000.

*The following are all by James L. and Janet Lockhart, no dates:*

**Known Descendants of Levi Lowe.**

**The Known Descendants of Richard Hammock: Albemarle Co., VA.**

**James Jackson and Descendants.**

**Hans Jacob Gandee and His Descendants.**

**The Hunt Genealogy of Roane County, West Virginia.**

**John Taylor 1<sup>st</sup> and Descendents from 1478 to 2000.****The James Harper Family of Roane County, West Virginia 1762 to 1998.****ARCHIVES AND HISTORY STAFF****Fredrick Armstrong:** Director**Debra Basham:** Archivist (photographs, special collections)**Greg Carroll:** Historian (Civil War, Native American history)**Dick Fauss:** Archivist (microfilm and moving images)**Elaine Gates:** Part-time Library Assistant (microfilming and microfilm repairs)**Joe Geiger:** Historian (Web page)**Ed Hicks:** Photographer (archival photography, darkroom)**Mary Johnson:** Historian (John Brown)**Jaime Lynch:** Library Assistant (Records of the 1700's and early 1800's, Pennsylvania)**Cathy Miller:** Library Assistant (WV State documents, periodicals)**Sharon Newhouse:** Secretary to the Director.**Harold Newman:** Library Assistant (microfilming, Revolutionary War)**Pat Pleska:** Part-time Library Assistant (Clipping File)**Susan Scouras:** Librarian (cataloging, Kentucky, library collection, newsletter editor)**Bobby Taylor:** Library Manager**Nancy Waggoner:** Office AssistantContract employees working on special projects: **Constance Baston and Allen Fowler.****ARCHIVES AND HISTORY WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS, WHETHER INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS. WE HAVE MANY INTERESTING PROJECTS WAITING FOR YOU!**

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 This newsletter is a publication of :  
 The Division of Culture and History  
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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**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:***THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT: 1870-1970 [HISTORIC COSTUME EXHIBIT], NOW THROUGH FEB. 2001.** State Museum, Charleston.**“1910 CABELL COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA CENSUS,” NOV. 21.** Sheri Pettit, KYOWVA Genealogical Society, Huntington.**THANKSGIVING DAY, NOV. 23.** Archives Library will be *closed*.**FRIDAY AFTER THANKSGIVING\*, NOV. 24.** Archives Library will be *open* regular hours.  
**SATURDAY AFTER THANKSGIVING\*, NOV. 25.** Archives Library will be *open* 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**CHRISTMAS DAY, DEC. 25.** Archives Library will be *closed*.**NEW YEAR’S DAY, JAN. 1.** Archives Library will be *closed*.**MARCH 30–APRIL 1, 2001.** The Appalachian Studies Association will hold its 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, “Standing on the Mountain: Looking to the Future.” Snowshoe Mountain Conference Center.

*\*Only the Archives Library will be staffed--all other Archives offices will be closed.* The State Museum will be open any time the Archives Library is open. The West Virginia Library Commission Library in the Cultural Center is closed weekends and all holidays.

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY HOURS ARE 9:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, AND 1:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M. ON SATURDAYS. HOLIDAY HOURS ARE AS POSTED.**