



# West Virginia Archives & History News



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## WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS MEMORIAL ARCHIVES

### From the Editor:

Events of the past two months have heightened national patriotism and increased awareness of the sacrifices made on our behalf by emergency services personnel and the United States military. The subject of this issue was designated during the summer to coincide with Veterans Day in November, but has become more significant than ever. By coincidence, a display of letters to and from West Virginia soldiers is currently on exhibit in the West Virginia Archives and History Library through the end of the year. The antique display case placed in the Library to hold the letters and photographs will remain permanently with new exhibits every three months. The wood and beveled glass case will give us the opportunity to show you items in the Library and/or the Archives collections that the public normally does not see. We will let you know through *Archives and History News* when we introduce new exhibits.

### WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS MEMORIAL ARCHIVES

The **West Virginia Veterans Memorial** located on the State Capitol Complex grounds in Charleston was designed by P. Joseph Mullins. Mullins also sculpted the four figures representing

the four major 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts and the four major branches of military service. Over 10,000 veterans who died in service during a period of military conflict are memorialized on the black granite interior walls. The Memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day, 1995, and the final sculpture was dedicated on Veterans Day, 1999.

Using the basic information collected to determine names to be placed on the Memorial, a **Veterans Memorial Database** was established and added to the West Virginia State Archives and History Web site. The Database is searchable by name, military conflict, and county. The list includes the names of those originally included on the Memorial or added at later dates, as well as the names of those veterans who have been found to qualify for addition to the Memorial, but whose names have not been carved yet.

Honoring those West Virginians who gave their lives in service to our country during a time of military conflict is being continued by the **West Virginia Veterans Memorial Archives**, through the Archives and History section of the Division of Culture and History. According to **Patricia Pleska**, Veterans Memorial Archives Manager, the information in the Memorial Archives is being expanded and updated constantly, with the Veterans Database on the Web site being updated

at the end of every month. Pat is assisted with this monumental task by **Constance Baston**, Researcher, and **Ethan Byler**, Archives and History Intern, as well as other Archives and History staff. As you can tell by checking several names in the Database at random, many entries list little information about the serviceman or servicewoman except home county, date of death and the name of the military conflict during which the person died. Pat, Constance and Ethan research the resources available in the West Virginia Archives and History Library in order to add copies of obituaries, birth records, etc., to the Memorial Archives files.

Family members of some of the deceased have contributed photographs, newspaper articles and obituaries, letters, enlistment papers, etc., to their loved ones' files. A few families have also provided genealogy family group sheets showing the parents and siblings of unmarried soldiers, and the wife and children of married soldiers. For married soldiers, the Memorial Archives also places copies of marriage certificates in their files. With the aid of their families and friends, **biographies** will be written for as many servicemen as possible. Selected items will be digitally scanned and the resulting images placed in the on-line biographies. With only nine biographies on-line to date, Pat anticipates that this part of the project will continue for years before completion.

Pat and staff are seeking assistance from the public in several ways. Family and friends of people who died in service during a time of military conflict are asked to donate copies of photographs of the individuals at any age, whether alone or in a group portrait, formal or informal poses, although photos of them in uniform are especially desirable. Newspaper obituaries, printed memorials, letters to and from soldiers, enlistment papers, photographs of medals received, notification letters and telegrams, and other documents having to do with the life and death of these soldiers are requested. Donors may give the original photographs and documents, make their own copies of the items and

send us the copies, or may loan the items to Archives and History to be copied and returned. Pat prefers to have the Archives and History staff make the copies in order to insure the highest quality copy possible for digital conversion and for permanent preservation in the collection. Anyone unable to travel to Charleston should contact Pat, who will be happy to make whatever arrangements are necessary for items to be donated and/or copied.

Anyone who believes a friend or family member has been accidentally omitted from the West Virginia Veterans Memorial should first determine if that person meets the two basic rules for inclusion:

1. Proof of birth in West Virginia or proof of residency in West Virginia for a six month period prior to enlistment.
2. Death occurred during a defined period of military conflict (actual dates available on the Web site), although not necessarily during actual combat.

The next step is to contact Pat Pleska, who will go over the information gathered and make recommendations as to what further evidence is needed. If there is an error in the spelling of a name on the Memorial, or any other mistake associated with a veteran's name, please inform the Veterans Memorial Archives. Pat Pleska can be reached by calling (304) 558-0230, by e-mailing [pat.pleska@wvculture.org](mailto:pat.pleska@wvculture.org), or by writing to Archives and History.

Even the original submissions of names already carved on the Memorial must be verified. Ethan and Constance research birth and death records, funeral home records, obituaries, high school and college enrollment records, etc., both in the Archives and History Library and by telephone to outside sources to determine if a person is qualified by birth or by residency, and by date of confirmed death. If a name carved on the Veterans Memorial is found to have been placed there incorrectly, the name will not be removed, but an explanatory note will be placed in the Veterans Memorial Database entry. If a new entry is

approved for the Veterans Memorial, the person's information will be placed in the Veterans Database immediately with a "To be carved" note in the file. These names will be added at a future date to the Veterans Memorial. Family members will be notified, a public ceremony will be held (probably on a Veterans Day or Memorial Day holiday), and the occasion will be publicized.

An interesting and important sideline to Pat's work as West Virginia Veterans Memorial Archives Manager has been her assistance to the **Korean War Veterans Association**. This veterans group is working with the military to identify the remains of United States personnel recently discovered in Korea, or the remains of "unknown" Korean War soldiers buried in military graveyards in Hawaii, now that identification is possible through DNA testing. Families of Korean War soldiers declared missing in action or known to have been held as prisoners of war are requested to participate in simple DNA sampling procedures in order to identify these remains and return the bodies of loved ones to their families. At the request of the Korean War Veterans Association (and indirectly, on behalf of the United States military), Pat has been locating and contacting three or four West Virginia families per month to let them know that the remains of their family members may have been found. Family members of Korean War MIA and POW servicemen and servicewomen are urged to contact Pat Pleska. She will put the family in touch with the proper organization to learn more about the process.

West Virginia has always been home to a significantly high proportion of the members of our armed forces. We are justifiably proud of our young men and women in the military, and are humbly grateful to those who gave their lives in service to our country. Although the West Virginia Veterans Memorial is a remarkable and lasting tribute, we want our veterans to be remembered as more than names carved in stone. Help us flesh out the stories of their unfortunately shortened existence so that the real lives represented by those names engraved in marble

will also be remembered and celebrated through the West Virginia Veterans Memorial Archives.

### VETERANS MEMORIAL INFORMATION ON OUR WEB SITE

Go to <http://www.wvculture.org/history> and click on "West Virginia Memory Project." Click on "Veterans Memorial." This takes you to the introduction for the Veterans Database and to links for "Search the Database," "Biographies" and "West Virginia Veterans Memorial."

### WEST VIRGINIA WAR LETTERS EXHIBIT

In commemoration of Veterans Day, a new exhibit, *"Hope to See You Soon": A Collection of West Virginia War Letters*, has opened in the West Virginia State Archives Library at the Cultural Center. The letters, photographs and other documents in the exhibit are from the collections of the West Virginia State Archives and the West Virginia Veterans Memorial Archives. Designed to complement the November 11 television broadcast of *War Letters* as part of PBS's American Experience series, the exhibit will remain on display through December.

Letters in the exhibit, which were written by West Virginia soldiers in the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, give first-hand accounts of battles and daily life in the service, seek information about people and events back home, and offer advice to family and friends. Other correspondence in the display includes several letters written by family members to soldiers overseas, a message left at the West Virginia Veterans Memorial for a soldier killed in Vietnam and a letter of condolence from the parents of a deceased soldier's war buddy.

Transcriptions of selected letters in the exhibit are available on the Archives and History Web site, at

[www.wvculture.org/history/warletters/warletters.html](http://www.wvculture.org/history/warletters/warletters.html).

The West Virginia State Archives welcomes the donation of materials documenting the war-time experience of West Virginians, whether they served overseas or worked on the home front. For more information about making a donation contact Fred Armstrong at (304) 558-0230. For more information about the *War Letters* exhibit, call (304) 558-0162. (News release courtesy of Ginny Painter, Division of Culture and History.)

### ***IN MEMORIAM***

#### **JOHN LAVERY**

John Lavery of Huntington, WV, passed away November 3, 2001, suffering a heart attack just as a dance ended at the Guyandotte Civil War Ball. Those who knew him best have all said that is the way he would have wanted his life to end—in a Civil War uniform, surrounded by friends and fellow re-enactors of the history he loved so much. Sherri Petit said the only other way he may have chosen would have been while leading the charge on the re-enactment battlefield.

John was well-known for his love for genealogy and Civil War history. Both interests brought him on occasion to the Archives and History Library, where all enjoyed his company and conversation. John was the organizer of Memorial Day services at Spring Hill Cemetery in Huntington, and was writing a history of the cemetery. An important part of the book was to be the listing of graves of previously unrecognized Civil War veterans. We know one or more of his friends will be sure his work is completed.

Many visitors to John's visitation and funeral wore period dress and uniforms at the request of his family. Fellow re-enactors took turns standing guard by his coffin during the visitation and at his burial they conducted a gun salute. Johnny's gone marching home.

## **JENKINS PLANTATION**

### **Civil War Holiday Party**

**Jenkins Plantation Museum will be hosting a holiday party on Saturday, December 8, 2001, from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.** A Civil War era string band will perform for both your listening and dancing pleasure. Refreshments will be served. Re-enactors and visitors in period costume will participate. Tours of the house will be conducted with a talk about what the holiday time was like during the Civil War. **The event is free to the public.** If you have an 1860's era costume or uniform, you are certainly welcome to wear it; otherwise, **casual dress is fine.**

For directions and other information see <http://www.wvculture.org/sites/jenkins.html>, call Jenkins Plantation, (304) 762-1059, or call Stan Bumgardner, Division of Culture and History, at (304) 558-0220, ext. 121.

### **DONATIONS**

The Archives and History Library continues to receive donations from historical and genealogical societies throughout West Virginia in response to our request for copies of their publications. Donations were cataloged in October from Monroe County Historical Society, Hacker's Creek Pioneer Descendants and The Upper Vandalia Historical Society. We appreciate their contributions toward the preservation and dissemination of West Virginia genealogy and history.

Also in October, staff members who visited the **West Virginia Book Festival** in Charleston were pleased to accept donations from several of the West Virginia authors present. Donations marked with an asterisk (\*) were received from Book Festival participants. We are very grateful to them and we hope other West Virginia authors will remember to preserve their work through the West Virginia Archives and History Library.

## OCTOBER NEW TITLES

**Elmwood Letters:** Monroe County Historical Society, 2001. [Letters of the Caperton family.]

**The Story of William Willis:** Albert Sidney Johnston, Monroe County Historical Society edition, 2000.

**The Stories of a West Virginia Doctor:** Harold D. Almond, 1997.

**Oxford University Computing Services Guide to Digital Resources for the Humanities:** Frances Condron, et al, 2001.\*

**West Virginia: Our State:** Tony L. Williams, 1990.

**Putnam County Cemeteries: Addendum:** Upper Vandalia Historical Society, 2001. [Supplements *Putnam County Cemeteries*, published in 1990.]

**Putnam County Marriages: 1848-1882:** Upper Vandalia Historical Society, 1997.

**It's Still a Wonder Just Being Here: Photographs and Poems 1981-1999:** T. Paige Dalporto, 1999.\*

**"Reaping the Whirlwind: The Confederate Raid and Federal Destruction of Guyandotte, Virginia":** a radio documentary script by Kurt Alfred Schneid, 2000.

**Tiger Cage: An Untold Story:** D. E. Bordenkircher as told to S. A. Bordenkircher, 1998.\*

**Fond Recollections: My Memories of Clennie:** Patricia Samples Workman, 1998.\*

**Air: Poems:** Mark DeFoe, 1998.\*

**Aviary:** Mark DeFoe, 2001.\*

**Different Battles: The Search for a World War II Hero:** Rody Johnson, 1999.\*

**At Home in the Heart of Appalachia:** John O'Brien, 2001.\*

**The "Almost" Christmas Pony:** Ruth Lynn Kirk, 1999.\*

**I Want to be the Reindeer:** Ruth Lynn Kirk, 2001.\*

**Forts of West Virginia:** James Morton Callahan, Hacker's Creek Pioneer Descendants edition, no date.

**Lewis County, W. Va., Death Records: Volumes III and IV:** Hartzel G. Strader and Alan L. Strader, 1995.

**Webster County Births: 1900-1908:** Nettie Gregory, 2000.

**Coal Facts:** West Virginia Coal Association, 2001.

**American Government: The USA and West Virginia:** William E. Coffey, et al, 1990.

**West Virginia: Our Land—Our People:** William Doherty, 1990.

## ADVICE FOR WRITERS OF RESEARCH LETTERS

When you write a letter to the Archives and History Library or other organization to request research information, please be sure to use the same name and address on each letter. If your name or address has changed since you last wrote, please refer to your previous name or address in your letter. Why? Well, we maintain files of research correspondence. When we receive a research letter, we check our files to see if we have heard from that person before, and attach any previous letters and replies to the new one. Knowing what has been researched for you already can be helpful in deciding research strategy in replying to your most recent letter. Also, if you have left out a piece of important information, we can sometimes find that information in earlier correspondence. Once in awhile we can save you money by letting you know that we have already sent a document to you in the past, etc.

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 This newsletter is a publication of :  
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 The Cultural Center  
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 (304) 558-0230  
 Nancy P. Herholdt, Commissioner

## 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.*

**VETERANS DAY, NOVEMBER 12.** Archives Library will be open.\*

**THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 22.** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AFTER THANKSGIVING, NOVEMBER 23 AND 24.** Archives Library will be open.\*

**“LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH,” NOVEMBER 23.** Holiday decorations in the Cultural Center, plus related events. The Cultural Center, Charleston. See the Calendar of Events on [www.wvculture.org](http://www.wvculture.org). Click on “Holiday Fair.”

**OPEN HOUSE, WV INDEPENDENCE HALL MUSEUM, DECEMBER 2.** Concert and reception, Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**JENKINS PLANTATION CIVIL WAR HOLIDAY PARTY, DECEMBER 8.** Jenkins Plantation, Lesage, WV.

**“A STRINGS MUSICALE,” DECEMBER 16.** Concert, WV Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24.** *Archives Library will be open 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.\**

**NEW YEAR’S EVE, DECEMBER 31.** *Archives Library will be open 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.\**

**HISTORY DAY 2002, FEBRUARY 28, 2002.** Capitol Complex, Charleston.

*\*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 AND HISTORY LIBRARY HOURS

**9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday.**

**9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.  
Holiday hours as posted.**

Staff Copy Service and the Microfilm Storage Room will close one half hour prior to closing each day. Archives and History office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The office is *closed* on all state holidays. Please make viewing arrangements for manuscript, photograph, moving images and other special collections during regular office hours.

## 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)

**Elaine Gates:** Part-time Library Assistant (microfilming and microfilm repairs)

**Joe Geiger:** Historian (Web page)

**Ed Hicks:** Photographer (archival photography, darkroom)

**Mary Johnson:** Historian (*West Virginia History*)

**Terry Lowry:** Cultural Program Associate (Civil War)

**Cathy Miller:** Library Assistant (WV State documents, periodicals)

**Sharon Newhouse:** Secretary

**Harold Newman:** Library Assistant (microfilming, Revolutionary War)

**Pat Pleska:** Veterans Memorial Archives Manager

**Susan Scouras:** Librarian (cataloging, Kentucky, library collection, newsletter editor)

**Jaime (Lynch) Simmons:** Library Assistant (Records of the 1700's and early 1800's, Pennsylvania)

**Bobby Taylor:** Library Manager

**Nancy Waggoner:** Office Assistant

On special projects: **Allen Fowler.** Intern: **Ethan Byler.** Volunteers: **Caroline Connor, Bill Kelley** and **Angela Tolbert.**