Isn’t it amazing how quickly a cell phone has become one of life’s essentials for the majority of us? As with any new invention, the etiquette of its use lags behind the need to develop self-restraint and common sense regarding that use. We all raise our voices when speaking on cell phones and ring tones are always disruptive, no matter how clever, and at any volume level. With a means of communication right in our hot little hands, we are forever impatient to make and receive calls immediately, not waiting the short time it takes to move to a more acceptable location. No one wants to hear anyone else’s personal—or business—conversation, but we seldom apply that sentiment to our own. We need to stop thinking of the phone as a person sitting beside us with whom we can freely converse while driving, dining, attending events—or researching in a library.

West Virginia Vital Research Records Project

Online Searchable Database and Digital Images of Selected Birth, Death and Marriage Records

The West Virginia Vital Research Records Project (WVVRR) 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 selected statewide death records in a viewable, downloadable and searchable format accessible at http://www.wvculture.org/vrr. While the majority of the eligible records are now in the database, 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 (see West Virginia Counties chart in our brochure or online at http://www.wvculture.org/history/wvcounties.html for formation dates). 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 birth and death certificates from that year through the present, as well as creating “delayed” birth records by affidavit. Additionally, the state issues copies of marriage applications from 1964 to the present, available through the Vital Registration office. Please note that divorce records are available only from the appropriate circuit court clerk, and are not available from county court clerks, the Vital Registration office or the West Virginia Archives and History Library.

The death records made available online in the Vital Research Records database come from two

History Day and History Hero Deadlines

History Day at the West Virginia Legislature is scheduled for February 18, 2010 at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston. On that day an awards ceremony will be held in the Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater to honor the latest History Hero award recipients. Registration forms for History Day tables in the Capitol and nomination forms for 2010 History Heroes will be mailed in early November to historical or genealogical societies, preservation and landmark commissions, and patriotic or other similar groups already on our list. If your history-related group is already receiving our monthly newsletter, West Virginia Archives and History

Continued on the next page
sources: county records as recorded on microfilm by the GSU largely from 1967 to 1970, and statewide death certificates as selected for release by the West Virginia Dept. of Health Vital Registration office. Currently the state death records are withheld 50 years from date of issuance. State death certificates for individuals from all 55 counties dating from 1917 through 1958 are available online through this project. Additional state death certificates will be added in a batch once a year (usually January 1) as all the certificates for a given year pass the 50-year mark of issuance. For example in 2010, the state death certificates for 1959 will be added to the database.

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, as for all the other 49, 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, with records 75 years or older at the time of selection posted online. Due to a change in the selection parameters since the records of the initial six counties were posted, subsequent counties added include only births recorded in those counties more than 100 years ago, meaning in 2009 only births for 1853 through 1908 are available, with additional births in one year batches to be added sometime after all the records for that year pass the 100-year mark, usually the number of the year recorded plus 101 years. For example, 1909 birth records will be available in 2010. The addition of state birth certificates to the database is not anticipated, although some delayed birth records may show up in the regular county birth records.

The records in the database are not fully transcribed and are searchable only by the information requested in the search boxes for each type of record. The “Detail” pages were set up to transcribe most of the record, but once the tasks of indexing and transcription were underway, GSU found full transcription to be far too complicated and time-consuming, so while earlier entries in the database include more details, most of the subsequent records have basic information with explanatory notes where applicable. The county record images are double-paged, 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. Some of the certificate-like marriage records were recorded two to a page and filmed two pages at a time, so scrolling up and down, left and right, may be necessary to locate a record.

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 microfilmed and transferred to the State Archives, that certificate book was lost. The following information appears in the Vital Registration index: name, date of death, county of death, and original certificate number. 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 county death records for them, and the county records are included in WVVRR. The Archives and History Library has the 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 requested in the search boxes for additional county records which were withheld from the database.

Wireless Internet Now Available in Archives and History Library

Wireless Internet service is now available for patrons in the West Virginia Archives and History Library Reading Room. Patrons using their own laptops are able to use the Library’s subscription services, Ancestry Library Edition and HeritageQuest Online, as well.

KVGS Bids Farewell

The Kanawha Valley Genealogical Society (KVGS) has disbanded due to lack of new membership. The contents of its library in Nitro were either sold or given away, with the West Virginia Genealogical Society, the KYOWVA Genealogical Society and the West Virginia Archives and History Library all receiving some of the resources. KVGS members as a society and as individuals have produced many publications over the years that will continue to benefit genealogy researchers and historians of the Kanawha Valley and its people for many years to come.
We are aware that the images are over-sized and that a user must scroll up and down, left and right, to view the entire record. Also, many of the two-page record images do not print in a legible size. Before notifying the Archives of any problem encountered in downloading and printing, please fully explore your options on your own computer first. Unfortunately, identification of the ledger in which a record was found was not included in the transcription, so those needing a specific citation of the county ledger volume in which a record appears will have to refer to the microfilm itself, or contact the county of record or the Archives. We have been unable to determine any way to improve these situations.

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 more specific, or try again at a less busy time. The recent upgrade of the image server and the database server have significantly improved service, so system time-outs should be rare now. 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, wvvrr@wvculture.org. If you do not have access to e-mail, call Debra Basham, (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. While the newsletter articles remain as written at the time of publication, the Quick Guides were updated in September 2009.


Organizations, societies and teachers 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 of the page, and as long as the reprint is not used for commercial purposes.

### Evening Workshops and Lecture Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Conducted by</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>Terry Lowry</td>
<td>Bastard Battalion: A History of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion in World War II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Dr. Kenneth R. Bailey</td>
<td>A Glimpse at Some Lesser-Known Prominent West Virginians</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>Scott Johnson</td>
<td>Genealogy and Law: An Introduction to Some Legal Issues in Genealogical Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Doug Wood</td>
<td>Digging into West Virginia's 18th Century, Groundhog Style</td>
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Registration for these free workshops is helpful but not required. Call our office at (304) 558-0230, or e-mail bobby.taylor@wvculture.org.

Workshops are held 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the West Virginia Archives and History Library, The Culture Center, Charleston, West Virginia.

### Kanawha Valley Heritage Fair

The Kanawha Valley History Center, located in the Rand Community Center in Rand, will again host the annual Kanawha Valley Heritage Fair on March 6, 2010. Displays, information and research resources for both genealogy and history will be available. Children’s activities and a Civil War demonstration are planned. Both organizations and individuals are invited to reserve free space to share information or materials to give away, or to register for sales display space for a fee. A limited number of tables are available on a first come, first served basis for those who do not have their own. For more information visit their Web site at http://kvhc.tripod.com, or contact: Linda Hoskins, Director, Kanawha Valley History Center, Rand Community Center, 5701 Church Drive, Rand, WV 25306-6001; (304) 925-2438 or kvhc06@yahoo.com.

### Darby’s Universal Gazetteer

Blannerhassett’s Island, a remarkably beautiful and fertile island of about 300 acres, in the Ohio river, opposite Belpre. It is so named from a Mr. Blannerhassett, an Irish gentleman of large fortune, who having, with his family, left Ireland in 1801, purchased and removed to this island, where he reared a costly and splendid edifice for his dwelling house. A considerable part of the island was laid out in gardens after the most approved models of European taste, and the whole scenery combined, seemed like the Continued on page 6
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News, by mail, then you are included on our mailing list. If your group would like to be added to the list, call Archives and History at (304) 558-0230.

History Hero nominations must be postmarked by December 31, or hand-delivered to the Archives and History Library at The Culture Center by the Library’s holiday noon closing time on that day. History Day registrations are due by January 28, 2010. For more information about History Day, or to request nomination or display space reservation forms, contact Archives and History at (304) 558-0230.

Archives and History Newsroom

Have you visited the Archives and History Newsroom on our Web site at http://www.wvculture.org/history/archivesnewsroom.html? The “What’s Happening?” link on the main Archives and History page will also take you there. Check often for news and photos of recent events relevant to the Archives and History section, as well as featured items from Archives collections. Current postings include:

• Archives Assistant Director Confirms That West Virginia Spruce was Used in Wright Brothers’ Planes
• Archives and History Partners with WVU Public History Class to Propose New Highway Historical Markers
• Employee Recognition Ceremony
• Archives and History Section Receives Grant for Highway Historical Marker Program
• Motorcyclists Help West Virginia’s Highway Historical Marker Program
• New Image of Mother Jones
• Archives and History Announces On-Line Photograph Exhibit on West Virginia Schools and Search for Additional School Photographs

Archives and History Library Workshop and Lecture Series
Continues on November 3

By Terry Lowry and Mary E. Johnson

Terry Lowry, noted military author and historian at the West Virginia Archives and History, will present a program on November 3 from 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. in the Archives and History Library in the Culture Center. Lowry’s presentation will focus on researching military records from the Civil War to the present in addition to a discussion of his recently released World War II book on the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion, Bastard Battalion: A History of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion in World War II. He also will have a display of many artifacts and documents from his personal collection.

When the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion was deactivated on November 26, 1945, their record read: 3 Distinguished Service Crosses (all posthumously), 5 Legions of Merit (one posthumous), 9 Soldiers Medals, 39 Silver Stars, 97 Bronze Stars, 5 Croix de Guerre, and 876 Purple Hearts and 91 Oak Leaf Clusters, 3 Unit Citations, 508 days in combat, and an estimated 500,000 rounds fired. They fought on two continents and participated in six campaigns, including amphibious and glider assaults, and their firepower was felt in Sicily, Italy, France, Germany, and Austria. The battalion lost nearly half their number in the sinking of LST 422, one of the worst naval tragedies of World War II. And after all this they were classified as Service Forces not entitled to wear the combat badge they repeatedly earned.

West Virginia contributed more than thirty men to the battalion, including the author’s father. Lowry spent nearly ten years researching his World War II book; he interviewed numerous veterans, spent countless hours at the National Archives reading official reports, attended reunions, and gathered thousands of photographs, as well as letters and personal correspondence of the many West Virginians and other members of the 83rd. Among the often quoted materials is the unpublished wartime memoir of Charleston resident Rupert Burford.

In addition to his recent history of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion, Lowry is the author of six books on the Civil War in West Virginia, including studies of the battles at Scary Creek, Carnifex Ferry, Droop Mountain, Confederate regiments 22nd Virginia Infantry and 26th Battalion Virginia Infantry, and co-author of a book on West Virginia Civil War images.

All Archives and History workshop sessions are free and the public is invited to attend. On November 3, the library will close at 5 p.m. and reopen at 5:45 p.m. for workshop participants only. To register in advance, contact Robert Taylor, library manager, at bobby.taylor@wvculture.org or at (304) 558-0230, ext. 163. Participants interested in registering by e-mail should send their name, telephone number and the name and date of the session. For additional information about the workshop, contact the Archives and History Library at (304) 558-0230.
New Titles

Kentucky Soldiers and Their Regiments, Volume I, 1861: Steven Wright, 2009.
One Hundred Years of Service to God & Man: Tallmansville Baptist Church, 1892–1992: Noel W. Tenney, 1992.
Wright Family Birth Records... in Nelson County, Virginia: Robert N. Grant, 2009.

VRR Now on New Servers

The West Virginia Vital Research Records database is now on its new servers and running quickly and smoothly. With the exception of some Kanawha County marriages, all eligible county and state records are online and searchable. If you haven’t tried VRR lately, go to http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_select.aspx and give it a whirl. Searching Smiths? The 26,857 death records for everyone named Smith pop up in a matter of seconds. Anyone for a rousing round of the “Hallelujah” chorus?

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.

“DISCOVERING YOUR APPALACHIAN ANCESTORS,” November 7:
Akron-Summit County Public Library and Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Akron.
For more information contact the Library’s Special Collections Division, (330) 643-0930, speccollections@akronlibrary.org, or visit http://akronlibrary.org/main-sc.html.

FRONTIER DAYS HISTORICAL ENCAMPMENT, November 7-8:
Shawnee Trail Associates and other groups, Museum in the Park, Chief Logan State Park, Logan.
For more information, visit http://www.wvculture.org/eventdetail.aspx?Id=866.

“DEVELOPMENT OF WEB-BASED HISTORICAL DATABASE OF JEFFERSON COUNTY LAND RECORDS,” November 9: Bill Theriault, speaker, Shepherdstown Men’s Club and Jefferson County Historical Society, Shepherdstown. For more information, visit http://jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/events.html or call (304) 724-7008.

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

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

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fabled fields of Elysium. But the house was most unfortunately burnt down in Dec. 1810, and shortly afterwards, the garden was totally destroyed, and few, or no vestiges now remain of its transient splendour and magnificence.

Blue Stone, river, Virg., rises in Tazewell, and flows NE. into Kenhawa river, Giles cty. having an entire course of 40 ms.

Blue Sulphur Springs, psto. Monroe cty. Virg. These mineral waters are situated near the Kenhawa river, 40 ms. SW. from Lewisburg, and 237 W. from Richmond.

Bucklerstown, village of Berkeley cty. Virg.*

*Editor’s Note: Miss Mary Jenkins listed this community in her Place Names in West Virginia (http://www.wvculture.org/history/wvplacenames.html), as Buckle Town and as possibly formed in 1826; cited Buckellstown, James Town and John Town as other names used; and identified its current name as Darkesville.*
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 11:** Archives Library will be open*.

**MINING YOUR HISTORY FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM, November 14:** Green Room, The Culture Center, Charleston. For more information, call Archives and History at (304) 558-0230.

**THANKSGIVING DAY, November 26:** Archives Library will be closed.

**THANKSGIVING FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, November 27–28:** Archives Library will be closed.

**“ALL QUIET ALONG THE POTOMAC—THE IMPACTS OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES ON JEFFERSON COUNTY,” December 8:** Doug Perks, speaker, Shepherdstown Men’s Club and Jefferson County Historical Society, Shepherdstown. For more information, visit http://jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/events.html or call (304) 724-7008.

**CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24:** Archives Library will be closing at noon.

**CHRISTMAS DAY, December 25:** Archives Library will be closed.

**DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, December 26:** Archives Library will be open*.

**NEW YEAR’S EVE, December 31:** Archives Library will be closing at noon.

**NEW YEAR’S DAY, January 1, 2010:** Archives Library will be closed.

**DAY AFTER NEW YEAR’S, January 2:** Archives Library will be open*.

**“BLACK HISTORY OF JEFFERSON COUNTY,” February 8:** Jim Taylor, speaker, Shepherdstown Men’s Club and Jefferson County Historical Society, Shepherdstown. For more information, visit http://jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/events.html or call (304) 724-7008.

**HISTORY DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE, February 18:** The West Virginia State Capitol and The Culture Center, Charleston.

**KANAWHA VALLEY HERITAGE FAIR, March 6:** Kanawha Valley History Center, Rand Community Center, Rand. For more information contact Linda Hoskins, (304) 925-2438, kvhc06@yahoo.com, or visit http://kvhc.tripod.com.

**“THE WASHINGTON FAMILY IN JEFFERSON COUNTY,” March 8:** Walter Washington and Betsy Wells, speakers, Shepherdstown Men’s Club and Jefferson County Historical Society, Shepherdstown. For more information, visit http://jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/events.html or call (304) 724-7008.

**“THE MINE WARS’ IMPACTS ON JEFFERSON COUNTY,” April 12:** Doug Estep, speaker, Shepherdstown Men’s Club and Jefferson County Historical Society, Shepherdstown. For more information, visit http://jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/events.html or call (304) 724-7008.

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

The West Virginia Library Commission Library in the Culture Center is closed weekends and all holidays.
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.
Contact West Virginia Archives and History News Editor Susan Scouras, (304) 558-0230, Ext. 742, or by e-mail: susan.scouras@wvculture.org.

Archives and History Staff

Joe Geiger .................................................................................................................................................... Director
Bryan Ward .................................................................................................................................................. Assistant 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)
Denise Ferguson .......................................................................................................................................... County Records Archivist
Allen Fowler .................................................................................................................................................. Special projects
Elaine Gates .................................................................................................................................................. Library Assistant (microfilming and microfilm repairs)
Ed Hicks ....................................................................................................................................................... Photo Archivist (archival photography, darkroom)
Mary Johnson .................................................................................................................................................. Historian (Veterans records)
Terry Lowry ................................................................................................................................................. Historian (Veterans records)
Cathy Miller .................................................................................................................................................. Library Assistant (WV State documents)
Harold Newman .......................................................................................................................................... Library Assistant (microfilming, Revolutionary War)
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 Waggner ............................................................................................................................................ Secretary
Kyle Campbell ................................................................................................................................................ Part time
Volunteers .................................................................................................................................................... Carolyn Conner, Bill Kelley, James Wilburn, Sue Shank, Charlotte Thurston, and Ken Bailey