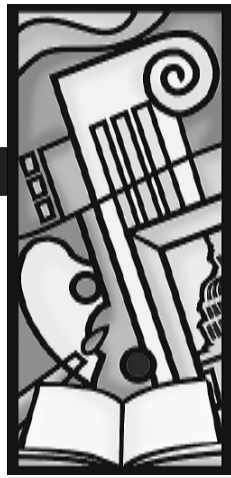


West Virginia Archives & History NEWS

VOLUME IX No. 3 JUNE 2008



WEST VIRGINIA
DIVISION OF
CULTURE & HISTORY

From the Editor:

With fuel costs rising rapidly, road trips for family research may be problematic for many this summer. If you are researching multiple West Virginia counties, plan a single trip to the Archives and History Library to collect as much information here as possible from our county records microfilm, plus our history and genealogy books and files. You may not need to go elsewhere at all. For those researching other states (and countries), explore our non-West Virginia collections and take advantage of free online access for Library patrons to Ancestry Library Edition and HeritageQuest. Both contain nationwide databases, HeritageQuest offers genealogy and history books online, and Ancestry has many international resources.

Economical Family History Projects Close to Home

Can't afford to travel this summer? Don't have money for "extras" after grocery shopping and paying utilities? Here are some ideas to allow you to continue to make progress with your family history when your usual trip to your family's home county or to a research library are not possible this year, or if your budget no longer allows such things as online database subscriptions.

- **Fully explore the resources close to you.** Check the collections of all the libraries within reasonable traveling distance of your home for books and non-book collections relating to your family names and locations. In particular, visit college and university libraries in addition to public libraries. Most have online catalogs these days, many accept reference questions by e-mail, and all will have a Reference Desk phone number. Find the nearest Family History Center of the Church of the Latter Day Saints and any local society libraries, then explore options for your research through their

services. Can't travel to an adjoining state's main research center? Check resources just across the nearest border. For instance, a visit to the Boyd County Public Library in Ashland, KY, may save you a trip to Frankfort, since they have microfilm of many state records, abundant resources for eastern Kentucky counties, and much information on central and western Kentucky counties as well.

- **Inquire at your local library or history center if books and microfilm can be obtained through interlibrary loan or rental services.** There may be fees involved, but the cost would be less than travel costs to visit the other sites. **[Editor's Note:** The West Virginia Archives and History Library currently does not have the capability to offer

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West Virginia Adjutant General's Records of Discharges

The West Virginia Adjutant General's records of discharges for West Virginia soldiers in the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War, usually available through the West Virginia State Archives, have been temporarily returned to the Adjutant General's office beside the Coonskin Armory in Charleston. The Adjutant General's office requested the records as backup while their own records are being

digitized. To obtain information from these records while they are housed in the Adjutant General's office, call Stephanie at (304) 561-6530, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. In addition to the discharge records of the Adjutant General, some World War I and World War II discharges are recorded in county records, and are available on microfilm in the West Virginia Archives and History Library.

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interlibrary loan or microfilm rental through other collections to our patrons, nor does any of the Library's collection circulate.]

- **Look for local libraries that offer free access to subscription Web sites, then learn how to use them.** If you are computer phobic or are simply procrastinating about learning how to use a computer, this is the perfect time to find a beginner's class in computer skills. Most community adult education schools, some public libraries, and many senior citizens groups offer computer classes.
- **Take a break from collecting new information and records, and organize the materials you have now.** Read through your files, making additions and corrections as you go along. You may find that you already have the answer to a burning question in a long-neglected corner of your research. Bits of information or copies of records that seemed of little importance or relevance when first obtained can take on great significance as you have learned more over time.
- **Start writing a family history based on the research you have completed already.** You will never have a truly complete history, so pick a starting and stopping point and begin writing. Keep

note of gaps or unsupported dates you find as you go along that you can search and document when you resume active research. You can always issue a revised edition in the future.

- **Not ready to write an actual family history book? Start with small sections that stand alone and can be easily finished in a small amount of time.** Write down family stories or compose brief biographies of individual family members. Ask others to share their memories of these people and events with you.
- **Collect individual and family group information on living generations.** Has your niece recently married? Does your third cousin's son have two kids now or three? Gather up all those photographs of the new generation received in Christmas cards, birth and graduation announcements, etc., be sure they are properly identified in pencil or with acid-free ink, and scan them with copies of the appropriate family group sheets.
- **Put some leaves and fruit on the bare branches of your family tree.** Add such information as schools attended, hobbies, civic and religious affiliations and activities, military service, places traveled, birthday and holiday traditions, sports played—even interesting personal tidbits like favorite books and movies, languages spoken or beloved pets. Who in the family can sing like a bird, and who can't carry a tune in a bucket but laughingly loves to sing anyway? Any artistic or musical instrument talents? Keep comments positive to avoid alienating other family members.
- **Work on your photographs.** Remove your photos from non-

archival photo albums, shoe boxes and scrapbooks and place them in acid-free boxes and archival albums with Mylar sleeves. Check each one to see if all people and places in the photograph are identified and that the photo has at least an approximate date. If you can't identify someone or determine a date, make photocopies or scan them for e-mail and send them to friends and family members to see if they can help.

- **Join a local historical or genealogical society, or volunteer to assist with the genealogy section of your local library.** If you are unable to work for yourself, you may be able to help someone else use locally available resources. A side benefit may be that in the process you could learn something new and/or find new contacts for your own lines.
- **If you are willing to share your own research, seek other researchers for your surnames to exchange information.** For West Virginia family lines, the **Genealogy Surname Exchange** on the Archives and History Web site is a good place to start: <http://www.wvculture.org/history/surintro.html>.
- **Start reading newspapers on microfilm, at least skimming every article, and carefully checking all the local society columns for mentions of your family.** Make no assumptions about where anyone lived or may have visited, and read the news from all the towns and neighborhoods. If you can't afford very many photocopies right now, make notes and record the name of the paper, date and page number, so you or another researcher in your family can copy the articles at a later time. Even if you find few or

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no mentions of your family members, you will have developed a more complete understanding of the world in which they lived. [Editor's Note: See the March 2001, April 2006, May 2006 and June 2006 issues of *West Virginia Archives and History News* regarding newspaper research, available online at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/ahnews.html>.]

- **If you have some funds available, but not enough for a trip, consider subscribing to an online database (some offer trial or short-term memberships), hiring a local researcher, or**

conducting research by mail.

For information on writing a research request letter to the West Virginia Archives and History Library or to view a list of researchers for hire to assist with West Virginia research, visit <http://www.wvculture.org/history/services.html>.

We hope you find at least one useful suggestion in this list. Please feel free to share any ideas of your own with us for the July issue. Contact Susan Scouras, Editor, *West Virginia Archives and History News*, (304) 558-0230, susan.scouras@wvculture.org.

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

Braxton County Family Research Library

The Braxton County Family Research Library is housed in a special room of the Gassaway Public Library. This genealogy collection was originally established by the Braxton County Genealogical Society, which is unfortunately defunct. The Family Research Library is now maintained and staffed by volunteers, and is open on Fridays from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. The collection includes transcriptions book for births, deaths and marriages, as well as census; family histories, some being one-of-a-kind, unpublished works; county histories; information on Braxton and surrounding counties; and some resources for Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Limited research requests are accepted by mail with enclosure of a self-addressed stamped envelope. Currently no fees are charged, but copy costs will be billed at \$.25 per page. Kudos to the Gassaway Public Library for keeping this resource available to the present citizens and the descendants of former citizens of Braxton County.

Contact information:
Brenda Hickman, Librarian
Gassaway Public Library
536 Elk Street
Gassaway, WV 26624
<http://gassaway.lib.wv.us/>

Is your West Virginia historical or genealogical organization offering programs or classes about family history or local history?

Does your society have a reference library that is open to the public?

Does your local public library have a sizeable genealogy and local history collection?

*West Virginia Archives and History News
Wants to Know!*

Send information on your activities and services (particularly research services) regarding history and genealogy to:

Susan Scouras, Editor,
West Virginia Archives and History News

susan.scouras@wvculture.org
Archives and History Library,
The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd., East,
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

Please include contact information.

A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia

By Mary E. Johnson

West Virginia Day on June 20, 2008, is the 145th anniversary of the birth of the state of West Virginia amid the turmoil of the American Civil War. One of the pivotal events in the history of the United States, the Civil War was also momentous to Virginia for the rending of the state into two parts, east and west, and the formation of a new state called "West Virginia." It is the events that led to the creation of West Virginia in 1863 that are the focus of "A State of Convenience," an online exhibit on the West Virginia Archives and History Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/statehood.html>. Divided into sixteen chapters, the online exhibit begins with the decades-long divisions between the eastern counties of Virginia and their sister counties to the west. Subsequent chapters trace the road to statehood from the formation of a loyal Virginia government by western counties after the state government in Richmond seceded from the Union, through the meeting of various conventions, to the inauguration of Arthur Boreman as West Virginia's first governor.

The chapter divisions and brief explanatory text provide the structure for the exhibit's most important feature—primary documents on the statehood period from the State Archives collections. "A State of Convenience" is an educational tool that offers historians, students and others interested in West Virginia statehood the opportunity to read the actual words of the participants themselves. As one example, the online exhibit offers the December 3, 1861, proceedings of the First Constitution Convention, when delegates consider whether to keep the name "Kanawha," which had appeared on

the statehood referendum approved by voters the previous October, or adopt another name. Congressional debate over slavery and West Virginia statehood is another example where the participants' words are available through the online exhibit.

Transcriptions of the day-to-day proceedings of the First and Second Wheeling conventions, President Abraham Lincoln's opinion on the

admission of West Virginia, and the state's first constitution are some of the other primary-source documents through which individuals can learn about the process by which West Virginia became the thirty-fifth state in the Union. Dozens of illustrations of participants in the process, as well as secondary resource materials, are also available as part of the exhibit.

Editor's Note: *This article is a slightly adapted encore presentation of the original piece that was published in the July 2006 issue.*

Admission Fees Eliminated for Grave Creek Mound and West Virginia Independence Hall

Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex in Moundsville and West Virginia Independence Hall Museum in Wheeling, two historic sites operated by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, no longer have admission fees. Although the fees were not high at \$3.00 per adult and \$2.00 per child/student, free admission will make the sites even more accessible to both West Virginians and out-of-state visitors. Governor Joe Manchin III made the announce-

ment that he had eliminated the fees on May 15, effective immediately. For more information on Grave Creek Mound, visit <http://www.wvculture.org/sites/gravecreek.html> or call (304) 843-4128. For more information on West Virginia Independence Hall, visit <http://www.wvculture.org/sites/wvih.html> or call (304) 238-1300. Information on these and other sites is also available by calling 1-800-CALLWVA.

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.

"WRITING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY" WORKSHOP,

June 3: Kanawha Valley Family History Center, Rand Community Center, Rand. For more information call Linda Hoskins at (304) 925-2438 or the Center at (304) 542-3817.

"USING A SCANNER FOR FAMILY HISTORY,"

June 5: West Virginia Archives and History Library Evening Workshop, presented by Pam Gibson, Archives Library, The Cultural Center, Charleston. For more information, call Bob Taylor at (304) 558-0230. Registration is requested but not required.

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.

WEST VIRGINIA DAY, June 20: Archives Library will be open.*

WEST VIRGINIA BIRTHDAY DINNER AND LECTURE "THE 35TH STAR—THE CREATION OF WEST VIRGINIA," June 20: Dr. Forest Bowman, keynote speaker.

Sponsored by Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation, Beverly.

For reservations, call (304) 637-7424, or e-mail richmt@richmountain.org.

LEMUEL CHENOWETH DAY, June 21: Community-wide celebration in Beverly of the building of the Philippi and Beverly covered bridges.

For more information visit <http://www.historicbeverly.org> or call (304) 637-7424.

"TRAVEL A TURNPIKE THROUGH TIME," June 21: Exhibit grand opening. Exhibit showcases the history and development of the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike National Scenic Byway. Beverly Heritage Center, Beverly.

For more information visit <http://www.historicbeverly.org> or call (304) 637-7424.

WARRIORS CAMP LIVING HISTORY DEMONSTRATIONS AND WEST VIRGINIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL HISTORY ALIVE! PRESENTATION OF CHEROKEE COMMANDER OUTACITE OSTENACO,

June 29: Blennerhassett Island State Park, Parkersburg.

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

BEVERLY HERITAGE DAYS, July 19–20: Community-wide celebration in Beverly, including primitive and Civil War encampments, heritage living and craft demonstrations.

For more information visit <http://www.historicbeverly.org> or call (304) 637-7424.

"LOOK! SEE HOW WE HAVE GROWN," HACKERS CREEK PIONEER DESCENDANTS 27TH ANNUAL GATHERING, August 7–10: Honor. For more information visit <http://www.hackerscreek.com>, call (304) 269-7091, or e-mail hcpd@hackerscreek.com.

250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR PROGRAM, August 30:

Doug Wood and members of Trails, Inc., re-enactors. Tomlinson Run State Park, New Manchester.

For more information visit http://www.wvstateparks.com/French_Indian_War.html.

LABOR DAY, September 1: Archives Library will be *closed*.

"THE CONTROVERSIAL CONFEDERATE FLAG," September 19:

Lecture by Dr. John M. Coski. Sponsored by Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation, Beverly.

For reservations, call (304) 637-7424, or e-mail richmt@richmountain.org.

14TH ANNUAL ROANE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL FAIR, September 27:
Roane County Historical Society, Heritage Park Community Building, 110 Church Street, Spencer.

**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.

West Virginia Division of Culture and History
 The Cultural Center
 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
 Charleston, WV 25305-0300



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 Acting Director (Historian, Web page)
- 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
- Terry Lowry Library Assistant (Veterans records)
- Cathy Miller Library Assistant (WV State documents, periodicals)
- Sharon Newhouse Secretary
- 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 Waggoner Secretary
- Volunteers Carolyn Conner, Bill Kelley, James Wilburn, Sue Shank, Ken Bailey, Maggie Powers, and Carol Vandevender

This newsletter is a publication of : The West Virginia Division of Culture and History
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