Spring 2016

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West Virginia & Regional History Center

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Jerry West Papers Elucidate the Career of an Icon

Jerry West is considered by many to be the greatest athlete West Virginia has ever produced. His amazing basketball statistics and revered reputation on the hardwood leaves little room for argument. West left a lasting impact on WVU basketball and beyond, establishing himself as one of the greats in the National Basketball Association. He is widely equated with brilliant and skillful basketball and an unmatched drive to succeed.

Born in Cabin Creek, Kanawha County, and raised in nearby Chelyan, West grew up in an impoverished family with six children. During a turbulent and sometimes painful childhood, particularly after the death of his older brother in the Korean War, West found comfort in exploring the neighboring mountains and immersing himself in the sport of basketball. A self-described 'loner' with an active imagination, his childhood fantasies included playing all roles on his dream team, among them coach, star player and the fearless hero making the last second clutch shot to always win the game.

The result of endless hours of shooting hoops and pretend court play would bear fruit at East Bank High School in Kanawha County. Although he saw little playing time as a sophomore, West broke out during his junior season. In his senior year, he became the first West Virginia high school player to score over 900 points in a single season. His exploits carried his team to the 1956 state championship. After clinching the title, East Bank High School was renamed West Bank for a week in the star player’s honor.

As a result of his impressive high school career, some sixty colleges vied to recruit West, including perennial powerhouses like Kansas and Maryland. A West Virginian at heart, he elected to attend West Virginia University and moved to Morgantown.

The move to what seemed a big city proved to be a difficult transition for the shy young man. He was fortunate to find support and a maternal influence in the owner of the house in which he boarded, Anne Dinardi. A pharmacist by trade, Dinardi served as a house mother of sorts to not only Jerry but a host of other WVU basketball players during this period including Willie Akers and Rod Hundley.
When he was on the basketball court, all of West's discomfort disappeared. Playing under Coach Fred Schaus from 1957 to 1960, he earned an impressive assortment of honors and awards. He set twelve school records in 93 games and was twice named All-American, averaging 24.8 points and 13.3 rebounds. During the West years, the Mountaineers recorded 81 wins against just 12 losses. This included an appearance in the 1959 NCAA National Championship game in which WVU lost to California by one point. Despite the loss, Jerry was named the MVP in the tournament.

In 1960, West added an Olympic medal to his trophy collection. As co-captain of the United States team in Rome, he averaged 13.5 points in eight games and helped lead his team to Olympic gold. He would later look back upon the experience of representing his nation in world competition as a defining moment in his career - winning an Olympic Gold Medal as an amateur was both thrilling and a superlative honor.

West would not remain an amateur for long. The Lakers drafted him later that same year, just as the team was moving from Minneapolis to Los Angeles. During the next fourteen years, Jerry played in 932 games for the Lakers, averaging a remarkable 27 points, 5.8 rebounds, and 6.7 assists per game. The Lakers made the playoffs 13 times during this span, winning the NBA title in 1972. West was named to 14 All-Star teams and was elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1980.

Jerry West's extraordinary statistics on their own do not reveal all of his abilities and talents. He earned the nickname “Mr. Clutch” for his ability to make big plays at that crucial moment between winning and losing and the Lakers counted on it. In 1970, in Game 3 of the NBA Finals against the New York Knicks, West made one of the most famous buzzer-beater shots in basketball history – a 60 foot shot that tied the game.

It is widely acknowledged that Jerry is the model for the NBA logo, his silhouette deftly handling a ball against a field of red and blue. Despite his iconic status, West distanced himself from accolades and endeavored to be a team player throughout his career. While he demanded perfection of himself, he worked hard to avoid intimidating or alienating his fellow players – he was and remains extraordinarily beloved by many in the NBA.

When his playing days were over, West transitioned from jersey to coat and tie, coaching the Lakers successfully for three seasons between 1976 and 1979. He later served as a scout for the Lakers and then as General Manager from 1982 to 2002. He held himself to the same high standards...
off the court as he had when he was on it and became noted for his eye for recruitment. Under his guidance the Lakers winning tradition continued with 13 play-off appearances and four NBA titles. He was at the forefront of creating the Lakers powerhouse in the 1980s and again in the 1990s when he brought superstars Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant to LA.

After a 40 year career with the Lakers, West retired in 2002 but couldn't stay away from basketball. Later that year he became President of Basketball Operations for the Memphis Grizzlies, a position he held until 2007. Four years later he became a member of the Executive Board of the Golden State Warriors, a role in which he continues to this day.

Jerry West's legacy and impact on the history of basketball cannot be overstated. His name is a household word. His profile is the very logo for the sport. His example has inspired, and continues to inspire, young athletes in West Virginia and across America to reach for their dreams. His legion of fans range from the West Virginia hills to Capitol Hill. In February 2016, at a White House event honoring the Golden State Warriors, President Barrack Obama sparked a standing ovation when he described Jerry West with a few powerful words – “…NBA legend. One of the greatest of all time…”

About the Jerry West Collection

Mountaineer fans, basketball enthusiasts, and sports aficionados now have access to a treasured collection that documents the life of a basketball legend at the West Virginia & Regional History Center. The Jerry West Papers comprise over 18 linear feet of letters, scrapbooks, photographs, videos, sound recordings, and artifacts.

The collection includes materials that West loaned to Jonathan Coleman for use in co-authoring the memoir West by West: My Charmed, Tormented Life, which offers a candid account of West’s personal and professional life. They include items from West’s time at East Bank High School, his college recruitment and basketball career at WVU, his employment with the Lakers, his career as a basketball coach for the Lakers and manager for the Memphis Grizzlies, his family life, events honoring him, and more.

Also included are Coleman’s book drafts, material he collected for background research, his research notes, and interviews he conducted for the book. Most interviews are with Jerry West; other interviewees include Karen West and other family members, as well as Willie Akers, Fred Schaus, Mitch Kupchak, Jeanie Buss, Elgin Baylor, Gary Colson, Jerry Buss, Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Shaquille O’Neal and Michael Jordan.

West Virginia Day 2016 to Honor Jerry West

Jerry West began his legendary career in his home state of West Virginia, first on the court at East Bank High School and then as a West Virginia University Mountaineer, before his celebrated 40 year career with the Los Angeles Lakers. This year, to commemorate the gift of the Jerry West Collection to the West Virginia and Regional History Center, the WVU Libraries will celebrate West’s life and legacy during the West Virginia and Regional History
Center and WVU Libraries’ annual West Virginia Day Celebration.

The festivities will begin on Sunday evening, June 19, with a public reception at the WVU Visitor’s Center at One Waterfront Place. West himself will be on hand to meet visitors and autograph copies of his recent book West by West.

On Monday, June 20, the traditional West Virginia Day forum will take place at the Downtown Campus Library. Along with Jerry West featured speakers will include basketball greats Bob Huggins and Willie Akers.

After the forum, the West Virginia and Regional History Center’s Davis Family Galleries will host the opening of a new exhibit focusing on West’s legendary career. Commemorative posters will be distributed to all comers and everyone is invited to have a piece of West Virginia Birthday cake.

In conjunction with this year’s theme, the West Virginia and Regional History Center is pleased to announce the launch of a new digital collection devoted to Jerry West. This online resource will provide access to photographs of key moments in West’s career as well as clips from oral history interviews with basketball greats Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Shaquille O’Neal and others. The digital collection will be available from the Center’s website.

This year’s West Virginia Day celebration will be of interest to sports fans and history buffs alike, so please mark your calendars to join us on June 19 & 20. All events are free and open to the public.

Lori Hostuttler Named Assistant Director of the West Virginia and Regional History Center

A familiar face at the West Virginia and Regional History Center is taking on a new role. On April 4, 2016, Lori Hostuttler became Assistant Director of the WVRHC. In her new role, Lori will handle many daily operations of the Center and oversee research, instruction, and outreach services.

Lori has a significant history at the Center. Her first assignment back in 2001 was working with the Center’s vast political papers. From 2004 to 2010 she managed the Center’s photographs collection. During that time, she oversaw the development of West Virginia History OnView, the Center’s online photographs database and spent considerable time working with patrons at the Center’s reference desk.

While working at the Center, Lori pursued a Masters of Library and Information Science. After completing her degree, she left the WVRHC to work at the WVU Health Sciences Library where she worked in Research Services and Access Services and served as Assistant Director for two years.

A love of history and the wealth of collections in the West Virginia and Regional History Center drew Lori back to the Center in 2014 as Digital Projects and Outreach Archivist. It is hoped that she will remain for many years to come!

Visiting Committee
West Virginia University Libraries

Diane Hackney-Oliver, Charleston, WV
Brooks F. McCabe, Jr. Charleston, WV
R. Samuel Oliver, Charleston, WV
John E. Stealey, III, Shepherdstown, WV, Chairman
Richard R. Strother, Washington, DC

West Virginia and Regional History Center Blog and Facebook Page

The West Virginia and Regional History Center has developed a social media presence. If you haven’t already, take a moment to check out the Center’s blog (https://wvrhc.lib.wvu.edu/news/blog). Every week the staff of the WVRHC add new entries about our collections and West Virginia history. We share untold stories, give a glimpse of the behind the scenes work at the Center, and highlight unique and interesting items.

The Center also launched a facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/wvrhc/). Please “like” us and you will see fascinating images on #ThrowbackThursday or #FlashbackFriday as well as links to blog posts and other special posts and announcements.
Selected Recent Accessions


Collection contains one disc, which includes a PDF file containing 496 scanned pages of the book Some Descendants of James and Sarah (Ravenscroft) Jones: Including Separate Sections of the Connecting Families of Ravenscroft, Collins, Hickman, Richards and Cain, by Marion Jones Arthur (Mt. Lookout, West Virginia: M.J. Arthur, 1992). James Jones was born in 1762, Charles County, Maryland and died November 10, 1850 in Ritchie County, (West) Virginia. His wife, Sarah (Ravenscroft) Jones, was born March 18, 1776 in what is now Hampshire County, West Virginia, and died in late 1859 or early 1860. Also included on the disc are three JPG image files that show the grave markers of James Jones and George Richards (1759-1835, an Indian spy during the Revolutionary War) in a cemetery in Pennsboro, WV. The latest copyright of the disc is 2007 by David L. Jones. The work was sponsored by Anne Royall Chapter of National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR).


Digital files and paper records pertaining to the history and genealogy of the Bourland and White families, as researched by Charles Bourland Jr. over a 20 year period. The digital files include a list of sources documenting the Bourland family (B sources) and the White family (W sources). The paper records are sources documenting the White genealogy (W sources); these items include facsimile excerpts from books, facsimile manuscripts, photographs, typed genealogical records, handwritten notes, maps, pamphlets, printed materials, genealogical charts, correspondence, clippings, and more. Content described in these original and facsimile documents dates from ca. 1870s-1990s, with family history information dating back to the 1600s. An incomplete list of the W sources housed in box 1 can be found in the “Sources Database” PDF file, starting on page 26. The White family came in the mid-1600s into Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, and moved in the late 1700s to Monongalia County, (now) West Virginia. The Bourland family came from Virginia and Massachusetts and moved gradually into Kentucky. Paper copies of most of the B sources are housed at the Hopkins County (Kentucky) Genealogical Society.


Photographs of West Virginia folk musicians taken by Thomas Brown. Most are identified by name. Instruments include banjo, fiddle, guitar, and voice. Performers include Charlie Davis (banjo), Myrtle Stemple (voice), Hazel Stover (voice and guitar), Lee Triplet (fiddle), and Bill Williams (guitar), among others.


Digital copies of color slides of West Virginia folk musicians taken by Thomas Brown. There are 88 items, most identified. Instruments include banjo, fiddle, guitar, and voice. Performers include Sherman Hammons, Sarah Singleton, Lee Tripplett, Melvin Wine, and Bill Williams, among others.


Poll book from the October 1864 election used to record the votes of Union soldiers currently in military service. This poll book was used by Company I, 84th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, stationed at Fort Bross near Petersburg, Virginia. The name of a “Captain Ross” belonging to this unit is written on the front cover of the poll book; this is likely John R. Ross.


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Letter written by Marmaduke Dent, 1863/03/11, from Granville, (West) Virginia to Dr. Frank. Dent was the grandfather of Marmaduke H. Dent, the first graduate of West Virginia University. Transcription of letter and photocopies are also included. Subjects of the letter include politics related to the possibility of West Virginia's statehood, including an upcoming vote, constitutionality, and race relations; Dent's patients and a local bout of smallpox; and family matters.

Harrison County Court Records. Survey for Land in Monongalia County. ca. 1812-1818, 1 item, Acquired in 2016. A&M 4166.

Copy of a survey dated 1785 for 400 acres of land in Monongalia County claimed by Robison Lucas. The copy dates from between 1812 and 1818 and mentions a conflicting survey made by Morgan Morgan in 1785. The copy is attested by Samuel Hanway, official surveyor of Monongalia County.

Harrison County Court Records. Two Plats of Downtown Clarksburg. 1822, 1 1/2 in., Accessioned in 2016. A&M 4165.

Two plats of downtown Clarksburg, West Virginia, both of which were surveyed in 1822 to establish “prison rules”. Plat dated 20 February 1822 includes an area of ten acres centered on the intersection of Main Street and Second Street. Surveyors include Richard W. Moore and Pearson B. Moore. Plat dated 19 April 1822 includes an area of ten acres containing the intersections of Main Street with First Street and Second Street surveyed by Richard W. Moore. Two additional documents describing the location of “prison rules” are attached to the plat with wax. The additional documents are dated 23 August 1822 and 23 October 1822. “Prison rules” were the boundaries within which debtors were required to remain by law. These boundaries were periodically changed by court order.


Glass plate negative of a portrait photograph of Mary Harris Jones, more commonly known as “Mother Jones”. Jones (born ca. 1837, died 1930) was a labor organizer who spent part of her career organizing coal miners in West Virginia. At age 86, Jones participated in and was arrested during the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike of 1912-1913. The photograph shows Jones seated in a chair and probably dates from between 1910 and 1925. The glass plate measures 11 in. x 14 in.


Charter for the Morgantown, West Virginia “tent” of the Knights of the Maccabees, a fraternal organization which provided life insurance and other benefits to its members. The charter is dated 20 December 1894 and is 22 1/2 in. X 28 1/2 in. The charter was signed by members of the “tent”, including an “A. Dayton”, assumed to be Alston Gordon Dayton, alumnus of West Virginia University and a West Virginia Federal Court Judge.


Watercolor painting titled “The Horner Girl's Farm - Summer” by Ann L. “Annie” Linger. This painting was created for a fundraiser to protest the construction of the Stonewall Jackson Dam.


Typescript records of the Charleston, West Virginia branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was founded in the summer of 1918 and first led by Mordecai Johnson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston. The bound volume includes minutes for regular monthly meetings, executive committee meetings, and branch meetings, generally in chronological order. A few handwritten documents and printed pamphlets are also included. The documents shed light on the general state of civil rights locally and nationally between World War I and World War II, as well as local dramatic, musical and other cultural events. The records show how much the local chapter of the NAACP also served as a social and political center for the black community in the early 20th century. Additional subjects include: West Virginia court cases State v. Lattimar, Brown v. Board, and White v. White; the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill; and discrimination and segregation in buses, employment, and the New Deal Homestead communities.


Collection of over 110 panoramic photographs documenting soldiers and military camps, conventions and meetings, West Virginia University (WVU), businesses, railroads, family reunions, and more. Types of image include group portraits, landscapes, and building photographs. Conventions and meetings include the WV Delegates to Daughters of the
American Revolution (DAR) Convention, the 13th Annual Meeting of the WV Dairymen's Association, the Democratic National Convention, the WV State Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), the United Steelworkers of America, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), and more. Businesses include the Morgan Shirt Company, the Greenbrier Ore Company, the Libbey-Owens Sheet Glass Company, and more. These photographs include both original and facsimile materials that are either separated from other collections, or are not associated with any collection. Some items may be Cirkut photos; a few items are negatives.


Two autobiographies written by Francis Harrison Pierpont (1814-1899) of Monongalia and Marion Counties, West Virginia, who served as governor of the Restored Government of Virginia during the Civil War. This booklet includes photocopies of two original autobiographies, which were written in 1883 for Robert Alonzo (or P.W.) Brock (21 pages and accompanying letter) and John McAllister Schofield (5 pages). The booklet also includes typescript transcriptions of both autobiographies, made by Jeannie Kyle. Also included are copies of a web page, book pages, a news clipping, a typescript copy of an address delivered by Captain James Chambers Pryor regarding Memorial Day and Pierpont (1932), and other material related to F. H. Pierpont. Christa Pierpont compiled the first draft of the booklet in 2015. The booklet is also available at the Library of Virginia.


This collection of panoramic photographs primarily documents the coal miners of Fayette and Raleigh counties. The photographer, Rufus "Red" Ribble, was born May 14, 1878, near Blacksburg, Virginia, and died December 27, 1967 in West Virginia. He came to West Virginia sometime before 1920 and lived out his life in Mount Hope. The collection contains 119 panoramic photographs, which were made with a large rotating camera called a Cirkut camera. These photos are contact prints; all but one are black and white. Images include group portraits, landscapes/views of towns, and a few views of store interiors. Subjects of the photographs include coal miners, mining towns, local businesses, and local social and church groups. The majority of the photos are group portraits of coal miners from Fayette and Raleigh counties.


Artworks by David Hunter Strother (1816-1888), a nineteenth century American illustrator and writer for Harpers Magazine whose pseudonym, "Porte Crayon," was a household word. Many of the drawings in this collection were made while Strother was studying art in Florence, Italy (1841-1843). The collection also includes a color lithograph by Mexican artist Casimiro Castro which depicts Strother on horseback in the lower left of the image; this lithograph is dated ca. 1879, at which time Strother was Consul General to Mexico.


Two-page letter from West Virginia artist Grace Martin Taylor (February 11, 1903-October 1, 1995) to "Merv," dated May 11, 1972. The letter is a reply to "Merv’s" questions about artist Hans Hofmann, in which Taylor briefly discusses Hofmann's teaching style during her time studying at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Art in Provincetown, Massachusetts between 1942 and 1957. She also provides citations to books and articles that mention Hofmann, and praises his work as a teacher and artist of "Abstract Impressionism" (Hofmann is known for his work in abstract expressionism).

Papers of the West Virginia Archives and History Commission, including meeting agenda, meeting minutes, memoranda, copies of proposed legislation regarding the Division of Culture and History, grant manuals, and grant applications. Material mainly dates from 2013-2015, with a small amount of material from 2008.


Digitized material from two scrapbooks compiled by Matthew Zervos, the West Virginia University Mountaineer mascot from 1986 to 1987. Items include photographs, ephemera, newspaper clippings and correspondence, recording many of Zervos’ appearances as the Mountaineer at athletic events, University sponsored occasions and his participation in community outreach. There are also photographs documenting the razing of old Mountaineer Field including rare images of the interior areas of the old stadium.