Editor's note: The following news releases by WVU newswriter Marissa Sura announce the arrival of two new collections at the WVRHC that are of extraordinary significance – the literary manuscripts of one of our state and nation's leading authors, and the papers of one of West Virginia and America's foremost political leaders. Nobel laureate Pearl S. Buck and Senator John D. Rockefeller IV are, in fact, towering figures on an international level. While each worked in a different way, they shared a common goal in endeavoring to improve our world through promoting understanding, compassion and respect across racial, class and cultural lines. Ironically, both were profoundly influenced by youthful experiences in Asia which informed their thoughts and actions forever after. To further the irony, one played a key role in preserving the legacy of the other!

"Forever Home," The John D. Rockefeller IV Papers

As U.S. Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV remembered his first experience in public service in West Virginia, an experience that would change his life forever, he described how everything he has done since has been grounded in his time in Emmons, located on the Boone-Kanawha County line -- in the families, in the children and in the people who fed him in their homes and helped him fight to restore their community.

His story is forever intertwined with the stories of the people of West Virginia. And those stories will continue at the West Virginia and Regional History Center thanks to a historic gift.

During a ceremony on November 8, 2014, continued on p. 2

The Pearl S. Buck Collection

Decades ago, on the southern end of Pocahontas County in the limestone valley known as "Little Levels," a young girl sat on a bench reading Charles Dickens and sampling grapes from the vine-covered portico of her family home. She was inspired by the panorama of the Appalachian Mountains, and now the manuscripts that she penned as an adult have found a new home, waiting to inspire a new generation.

On October 30, 2014, West Virginia University, West Virginia Wesleyan College and the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation announced that the three institutions would form a partnership to preserve and disseminate the legacy of Pearl S. Buck.

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Rockefeller and WVU President Gordon Gee designated the Center as the permanent home of the John D. Rockefeller IV Senatorial Archives and announced the naming of the John D. Rockefeller IV School of Policy and Politics at WVU. Gee then dedicated the John D. Rockefeller IV Gallery in the WVU Downtown Library in honor of the Democratic senator’s nearly 50 years of public service to the citizens of West Virginia.

“West Virginia is where I found my life’s purpose, my spiritual calling,” Rockefeller said. “My life’s journey led me to West Virginia, and it is in West Virginia that I hope my legacy will be remembered, and my journey as a public servant understood.”

“Senator Rockefeller is one of the most distinguished public servants in West Virginia’s history, so it is fitting that the senator’s legacy be forever preserved within the borders of the state he has served so well and faithfully for so long,” Gee said.

About the archives and gallery

The West Virginia and Regional History Center will house the complete collection of Rockefeller’s senatorial papers, which includes photographs, videos, speeches, record-ings, reports, correspondence, electronic records, artifacts and memorabilia from his 30 years representing the state of West Virginia in the U.S. Senate. The collection represents the entirety of Rockefeller’s 30-year tenure as a U.S. senator, and at 2,000 linear feet is one of the largest WVU has ever received.

With the addition of the Rockefeller archives, the WVRHC runs the gamut of state history. The Center already houses important collections of approximately two dozen political leaders of the state, including governors and senators. Of special note are the papers of West Virginia’s founding fathers – Francis H. Pierpont and Waitman T. Willey.

WVU will develop academic and outreach programs that will take full advantage of the immense educational and research value that Rockefeller’s papers hold for the history of public policy and the American political process.

The John D. Rockefeller IV Gallery will be the “front porch” of the Rockefeller collection. It will feature rotating exhibits and displays that reflect Rockefeller’s life and career, augmenting the archives and extending the reach of the collection to a wider audience.

“It is particularly appropriate that this gallery is in the heart of the WVU downtown campus because it physically signifies the central role that Senator Rockefeller has played in helping WVU to achieve its potential and realize its mission,” Gee said.

About the school

The new John D. Rockefeller IV School of Policy and Politics in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences brings together WVU’s academic programs in political science, public administration, international studies and
leadership studies—four areas in which Rockefeller has distinguished his career.

The school will become a cornerstone for WVU, advancing public policy development and implementation at the local, state, national and international levels. It will also provide improved academic and experiential opportunities for students and faculty.

“My career in service to West Virginia and its people was undertaken with a singular recognition that none of us exist solely for ourselves, but for the sake of others,” Rockefeller said. “The goal of the John D. Rockefeller IV School of Policy and Politics is to instill that passion in others—and empower them to make the world a better place.

“The school will be intensely focused on a deep academic study of ourselves, our world and its future,” he added. “Students will become tomorrow’s leaders and public servants. To do so, they will have to have a deep and abiding understanding that life is more meaningful if it is lived serving others. But they will also be thinkers, digging into a great range of issues with seriousness and a persistent pursuit of answers, solutions and bold new ideas.”

“Consistent with Rockefeller’s career in public service, the school will help fulfill our University’s land-grant mission,” Gee said. “It will capture the breadth and depth of our expertise and apply it to meet the needs of West Virginians.”

“The most lasting monument to Senator Rockefeller’s work will be the future leaders he inspires to dedicate their own lives to fulfilling that ‘common duty to mankind’—service to others.”

Family matters

Born in New York in 1937 to an iconic American family, Rockefeller was exposed to philanthropy, foreign diplomacy and public service from the time he was a child.

His passion for and dedication to civic engagement began as a young man. Inspired and transformed by his experience working with Sargent Shriver, founding director of the Peace Corps, he has a long-held belief that government is an instrument of social change and has long extolled the virtues of public service.

His upbringing in Manhattan, time abroad in Japan and schooling at Harvard would seem a long road from West Virginia, but as a young man he started on a quest to learn more about his country and make a difference in the nation’s communities. He did not venture down that road alone.

Rockefeller has devoted his life to the people of West Virginia with the full support and enthusiasm of his family. The call to service was not just answered by him.

On April 1, 1967, Sharon Percy married Rockefeller in Chicago. They have four children and six grandchildren, and after 50 years together are still known for the sense of humor and wit that keeps their relationship vibrant. Together, the couple made West Virginia their home and fought for the causes that they both believed in.

Sharon began Mountain Artisans, a quilting business for low-income artisans, served as a member of the board of directors of the Sunrise Museum and was a teacher’s assistant for the Head Start program in Coal Branch Heights. She served for 15 years on the board of the West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority. She has been president and CEO of WETA, Washington, D.C.’s flagship public television and radio stations for 25 years.

A “forever home”

Rockefeller’s visionary leadership has benefited WVU, West Virginia and the nation. Although his work on the Senate floor is coming to an end, he still has a vision for West Virginia’s future and is a champion for its citizens.

WVU is honored and proud to provide a “forever home” for Rockefeller and his legacy of public service, which will be—forever—part of the University’s identity.

Rockefeller has proved himself to be a tenacious fighter, a compassionate listener, an unwavering optimist and a true West Virginian.

He began his life atop New York’s tallest buildings, but was truly born atop West Virginia’s tallest mountains. He said, “I found myself at her potlucks and in her hollows. I found my life’s passion, a call to public service, in her people. I found … my forever home.”
As part of that agreement, a priceless collection of literary manuscripts by Buck have come to the WVU Libraries. The Libraries' West Virginia and Regional History Center will assume the responsibility of providing physical care for and access to the Pearl S. Buck Collection.

Born in Hillsboro to missionary parents, Buck became one of 13 Americans to win the Nobel Prize in Literature and the first of only two American women to do so. She was also the first American woman to win both the Pulitzer Prize and Nobel Prize in Literature. (Toni Morrison is the other in both instances.)

About the collection

The archives contain the vast majority of manuscripts to Buck's literary works in all forms. Much of the collection – 32 linear feet (almost 80 archival boxes) – is handwritten or typed with handwritten edits, revealing the thought process of one of the boldest writers of a generation. The collection contains elegant, leather-bound presentations of Buck's manuscripts for the biographies of her parents – *The Exile* and *The Fighting Angel* – two novels that helped earn her the 1938 Nobel Prize in Literature.

Also included in the collection are editorials Buck wrote for publications such as *The New York Times* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, the original paperwork for the preservation of her birthplace, and stamps that bear her likeness.

Controversial for her time, Buck was openly critical of societal structures that oppressed women and minorities, spoke out about civil rights in America and was defiant toward the Chinese government.

According to Buck scholar Peter Conn, within the past 15 to 20 years her reputation and writings have undergone a renaissance as academics and officials publicly acknowledged the importance of her contributions to the cultural history of China and to the cultural understanding between the East and the West. Several of her homes in China were even restored and opened to the public to much fanfare.

The collection joins the world's leading repository of literary manuscripts by West Virginia authors at the WVRHC, which is already home to those of influential writer and illustrator David Strother, poet Maggie Anderson, novelist Denise Giardina and poet laureates Irene McKinney and Louise McNeill. The presence of the papers of these and other writers will complement the Pearl S. Buck Collection by enhancing the primary resources available to those who wish to conduct research in the field of West Virginia authors.

About the partnership

West Virginia was a special place to Pearl S. Buck. As a child growing up in China, it was the only America that she knew and she cherished the stories her mother, Caroline, told her about the home they left behind. Her memories were so closely tied to her birthplace in Pocahontas County that she later became determined to restore and preserve the family home.

Similarly, Buck, who died just shy of her 81st birthday in 1973, wanted her literary manuscripts to reside forever in the state. When it was determined that the author's birthplace was not a fitting environment, former governor John D. Rockefeller IV, who was then president of West Virginia Wesleyan, rescued the plan by offering the papers a home in Buckhannon. With the new partnership, West Virginia Wesleyan and the Birthplace Foundation's participation will continue.

Together, the three institutions have developed a robust plan to promote the collection, open it to the public for learning and research, and provide ambitious programming to stimulate Buck studies in West Virginia and beyond.
• WVU and West Virginia Wesleyan will establish an undergraduate studies program for students across the state while creative writing graduate students at both schools will have the opportunity to learn more about Buck’s writings through access to the archives and the birthplace.

• A conference will be established consistent with the mission of the Birthplace Foundation – that the birthplace should be a “living gateway to new thoughts and dreams and ways of life.” The conference will explore and apply the ways in which Buck’s life and writings can be used as “gateways” for cultural expression, international awareness, intercultural understanding and humanitarian aid.

• The WVU Press will work with scholars to identify materials that may be suitable for publication in book form and in scholarly journals.

• There will be opportunities for students to engage in internships and gain field experience at the birthplace site. WVU’s Extension Service office in Pocahontas County will assist with the site’s maintenance, marketing and development.

• A new finding aid to the collection will be developed and will immediately bring the collection to the attention of the world.

• The WVRHC will collaborate with West Virginia Wesleyan and the Birthplace Foundation to develop a website for the collection that will feature an illustrated biography and an online guide to Pearl S. Buck holdings at the WVRHC including both archival collections and books – which currently number well in excess of 200 volumes.

From her writing achievements to her humanitarian efforts, Buck has historical and cultural significance on a global level. Now through the partnership of WVU, West Virginia Wesleyan and the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation, her collected works will continue to provide inspiration for generations to come.

The varied and unique resources in the West Virginia and Regional History Center make up the world’s largest historical archives/library focusing on West Virginia.

The growth of the WVRHC can be enhanced through gift support, now and in the future.

Including a gift provision in your will with the wording of “to the WVU Foundation, Inc. for the benefit of the West Virginia Regional and History Center of the WVU Libraries” will help a lot. Your support can be directed for acquisitions, resource conservation, staffing needs, or general purposes.

You might also consider designating the WVU Foundation as the beneficiary of a retirement account or annuity or life insurance policy. Kindly let us know how you would like your future support to benefit the WVRHC.

Gifts included in wills and beneficiary designations count in A State of Minds: The Campaign for West Virginia’s University as long as the donor will be age 70 or older by December 31, 2017. And please let us know of your support so that it can help the WVU Libraries reach its campaign goal.

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Selected Recent Accessions


Black and white photographs of Preston County, West Virginia schools, students, and teachers. Photographs show group portraits of public school students and teachers, school buildings, and other subjects. Schools identified include Albright High School, Bruceton School, Cherry Grove School, Chestnut Ridge School, Crane School, Deep Hollow School, Lick Run School, Mt. Nebo School, Preston County Institute, and Sugar Valley School; others are unidentified. Some of the photographs include identifications of teachers and photographers.

Class of 1912/1913, Lick Run School, Preston County, WV.


Records of men enlisted as substitutes and of men exempted from military service for providing a substitute. The records regard men mustered into the Union Army in Harrison County, West Virginia. Most of the records are written on official stationery and a few are handwritten. Records include dates of enlistment, names and physical descriptions of substitutes, names of exempted men, and signatures of a Provost Marshal or other officer.


Records documenting the enlistment of men into the Union Army in Harrison County, West Virginia. Some of the records are written on official stationery (mainly from the Chief Mustering and Disbursing Office or the Provost Marshal’s Office) and others are handwritten. Some of the records indicate that the man who enlisted was serving as a substitute for another individual. Records include dates of enlistment, names of enlisted men and recruiting officers, and value of payments made upon enlistment.


World War II letters and other material of Robert Carl Edgell (1925-1944), of Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. He was inducted into the U.S. Army in April 1943 and served overseas during World War II, where he was killed in
action. Collection includes a military document, correspondence, sympathy cards, and newspaper clippings. The military document is Edgell's order to report for induction (1943). The correspondence includes letters, a postcard, and telegrams. Some of the correspondence was written by Edgell to family about his military training and life at various camps in America (1943). The rest of the correspondence and most of the clippings pertain to Edgell's death and burial (1944-1947).


Photocopy of a letter dated 4 May 1945 written by Lieutenant Willabel Judd (1900-1989) to Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Judd while she was stationed in Paris, France. Also includes photocopies of the envelope and a photograph of Lt. Judd. Letter also has notes from the donor written on it. Lt. Judd was a member of the Women's Army Corps; she lived in Kentucky and later in Huntington, West Virginia. The letter regards Lt. Judd's daily and social activities. She describes talking with French civilians, socializing with officers, and attending a play. She also mentions information she had seen while working regarding the recently liberated Nazi concentration camps.


Three manuscripts compiled by Sam McColloch, including: the letters of Archie and Mahala McColloch, a West Virginia couple who moved to the Arizona Territory; the artwork of West Virginia painters Leona Hatcher and Lyle Bennet; and the mission logs and letters of Korean Conflict pilot John Walker Hatcher. All material compiled in these manuscripts is transcribed or photocopied. There are also three compact discs with digital copies of these manuscripts.


Photographs of John William Davis (1873 - 1955), an American politician, diplomat and lawyer. Includes photographs documenting his professional career. Over a 60-year legal career, Davis argued 140 cases before the US Supreme Court. Davis is best known as the Democratic Party nominee for President of the United States during the 1924 presidential election, losing to Republican incumbent Calvin Coolidge.


Photographs of Louis A. Johnson (1891-1966), Clarksburg lawyer, and Washington, D.C. politician who founded the law office of Steptoe and Johnson. Highlights include group photo with Eddie Rickenbacker and others walking at the Indianapolis Speedway attending a race (1936), photo with President Truman at American Legion Event (1949), and other American Legion event photos.


Civil war memoirs of Isaac W. Scherich of Greene County, Pennsylvania (1844-1928), who served with the 18th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry from 1862 to 1865. Scherich is spelled Scherick in official military records. Memoirs consist of a photocopy of the original typescript, which describes the history of Scherich's regiment and his involvement in various Civil War battles, including Hanover, Gettysburg, and Opequan Creek. Memoirs also recount Scherich's life after the war.


Telegrams sent by Captain William Thomas Singleton regarding moving troops and supplies after the end of the Civil War. Singleton served in the Union Army with the First West Virginia Infantry from 1861 to 1865. The telegrams date from 4 June to 21 July 1865, during which time Singleton was serving at the Depot Commissary at Clarksburg, West Virginia. Telegrams are handwritten copies on onionskin paper.


Material regarding the Sommerville family of Berkeley County, mainly concerning Robert A. Sommerville and his son Obed W. Sommerville. Includes a family history narrative (folder 1), transcript of a journal (folder 1), copies of legal documents (folder 2), and of photographs and portraits of Sommerville family members.
and of artifacts associated with the family (folders 3 and 4). Material regarding Robert A. Sommerville includes a transcription of family and personal memoranda he recorded in 1852; the transcript contains an account of the emigration of his father William from Ireland to the American Colonies in the 1770s, and excerpts from a journal kept by William Sommerville in 1794. Material regarding Obed W. Sommerville includes documents regarding his Civil War service, pension records, copies of legal testimony regarding his placement in a mental asylum, and his death certificate. All items in this collection are reproductions.


Records of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), District 29 Office, regarding arrangements between the UMWA Welfare Fund (or UMWA Health and Retirement Funds) and health care providers. The 1978 Coal Wage Agreement changed the Funds managed health care plan to a fee for service plan. District 29 encompasses southern West Virginia.


Programs, newsletters, photographs, and other material regarding the West Virginia University Athletics Department collected by John Antonik, Director of New Media. Includes programs for the All-Sports Banquet (1951, 1954), the West Virginia University Sports Hall of Fame 14th Annual Induction Ceremony (2004), and other events. Photographs are black and white and date from the 1940s; subjects of photographs include WVU sports teams, World War II veterans attending WVU, Fred Schaus (WVU basketball coach), Leland Byrd (WVU athletic director), and Bobby Jackson and "The Juggling Jacksons". Also contains a prospectus regarding the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts (ca. 1960).


Scrapbook of Eleanor Winslow Williams, of Clarksburg, West Virginia (born October 16, ca. 1890). Includes correspondence, newspaper clippings, theatrical programs, and photographs regarding Williams and her career as an actress in theaters on and off Broadway. Most of the newspaper clippings are reviews, with some interviews of Williams. Highlights include a letter from Claudette Colbert, with whom she performed in the play The Barker, and a well-wishing note from fellow actress Fanny Brice. Williams was born and raised in Clarksburg and attended King's School of Oratory in the Knoxville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, graduating in 1914. She was recruited into the major league of theater by an agent of New York impresario David Belasco to work with David Warfield. Her career extended into the 1950s, but this scrapbook chiefly covers her work into the early 1930s.