

Fall 2006

WVRHC Newsletter, Fall 2006

West Virginia & Regional History Center

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West Virginia and Regional History Collection

NEWSLETTER

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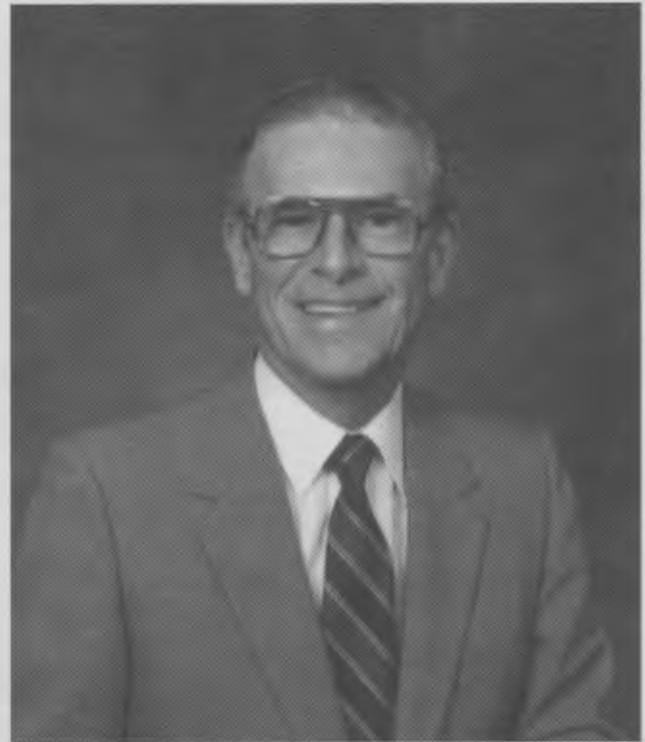
Robert J. Bennett Collection Opened to Research

If you attended West Virginia University anytime during the past half century, you can thank the late Robert J. Bennett for enhancing your college experience. Whether you were an engineering student seeking a place to study, an athlete performing his sport, or a student attending class, you likely benefited each day from Bennett's architectural handiwork.

From the late 1950s into the 1980s, Bennett designed new buildings for WVU and renovated others including the three signature landmarks of Woodburn Circle. After Bennett passed away in 1996, his wife, Jacqueline R. Bennett, and daughter, Sandy Bennett-Taylor, donated his architectural drawings for more than two dozen WVU projects to the West Virginia and Regional History Collection.

"My first thought when I came upon all of these renderings of University buildings was that they had to be preserved," Bennett-Taylor said. "We felt that the University would be the proper place, that they could refer to them in the future and have them for historic value." The drawings also hold special memories for Bennett-Taylor because she toured many of the buildings with her father. She recalls him pointing out the intricate moldings framing the tall doorways of Woodburn Hall among other memories.

"It was fascinating. My father was concerned with keeping the integrity of the original architecture," Bennett-Taylor said. Jacqueline R. Bennett said her husband felt privileged and honored to be able to do the work on numerous buildings for the University. "He was so happy they chose him to do it." Mrs. Bennett still



Morgantown architect Robert Jarvis Bennett (1920 - 1996)

receives compliments from folks who appreciate her late husband's work, not only at WVU but elsewhere in the Morgantown community. "When we're driving down Patteson Drive and see the steeple of Drummond Chapel or when I'm over on the Boulevard and can see the Shell Building, it brings back a lot of memories," Mrs. Bennett said. "I'm still very proud of him. He did so many beautiful things."

A Wheeling native, Bennett settled in Morgantown in 1949 after graduating from George Washington University and serving with the U.S. Army

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STAFF: Patricia Coulter, John Cuthbert, Harold Forbes, Lori Hostuttler, Kyla Lucas, Michael Ridderbusch, Anna Schein, Judy Sirk, Larry Sypolt, Michael Thobois, Francisco Tovar, Christelle Venham.

EDITOR: John Cuthbert
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Air Corps during World War II. Shortly after his arrival, he founded an architectural firm that later became Robert J. Bennett, AIA and Associates. His ties with WVU began in the 1950s when he was asked to redesign the dressing rooms at the old Mountaineer Field. WVU continued to turn to Bennett for the next three decades to design projects throughout the Morgantown campuses and also at Potomac State College.

Rudolph Almasy, Associate Dean of the Eberly College of Arts & Science, worked in Woodburn Hall before and after the building underwent its extensive facelift. He remembers being pleased that Bennett opposed gutting Woodburn and instead was able to retain the original woodwork, doors and transoms, as well as the shape of the large windows that stretch to the high ceilings. "Fortunately, the most important part of the building, the first two floors, was preserved pretty well," Almasy recalls.

Another campus landmark upon which Bennett left his mark is Elizabeth Moore Hall where he transformed a rooftop garden area into a studio for Dance Professor Kathryn Wiedebusch. With land on campus at a

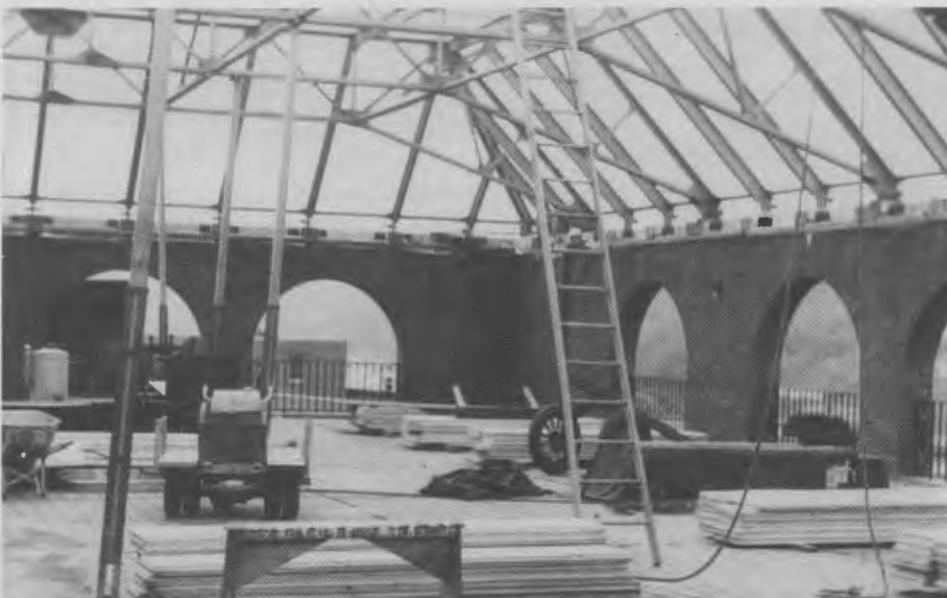


The Evansdale Library was built so as to permit the construction of additional floors in the future. A university museum was proposed for the building's third level.

premium, then University President Elvis J. Stahr Jr. wanted to avoid building the sorely needed facility from the ground up. The top of E. Moore Hall proved to be the perfect place. Bennett enclosed open roof arches into windows and added a dome ceiling, giving the program a dance floor bathed in natural light, dressing rooms, and an office. More than 40 years later, Wiedebusch still marvels over Bennett's work: "It's artistic; it's inspirational; it's a beautiful place to work; it's perfection as far as studios go."

New buildings designed by Bennett include the Clark Hall Annex; the Basic Sciences Addition; Knapp Hall; the Athletic Shell Building; and the Evansdale Library. According to Library Director Mary Strife, one of the most attractive features of the last mentioned is the abundance of study rooms "with a view" on the building's top floor. More than 25 years and a digital revolution later, the Evansdale Library is now wired for electronic resources and serves thousands of students daily. Strife routinely marvels at Bennett's vision in designing a "timeless" building capable of meeting changing demands.

Researchers with the time to marvel at the foundations of Bennett's timeless creations will find them waiting in the William J. Bennett Collection.



Construction of the E. Moore Hall dance studio, ca. 1961.

From the Airwaves to the Archives to the Stage; 'It's Wheeling Steel' Lives Again

In the fall of 1936, the Wheeling Steel Corporation launched a homemade variety radio program that was destined to make its mark on American broadcasting history. Created mostly as a medium for advertising the company's wares, the program's content consisted primarily of musical performances by amateurs drawn from the company's own ranks. While the program was broadcast only locally at first, as word of its charming hometown, "family" nature spread, its audience swelled into the millions.

The incredible story of 'It's Wheeling Steel' was recounted in the Fall 1992 issue of the Regional History Collection *Newsletter* which announced the acquisition of the original radio transcriptions and archives of the show. The recordings, scripts and other memorabilia



Phillip De Pasquale at work and play, from Life Magazine article as on "It's Wheeling Steel," March 1938.

were recovered from a warehouse in Wheeling where they had languished since the show came to an end in 1944. Now available to researchers on audiotape, the recordings clearly demonstrate the program's broad appeal as well as its influence on later musical variety productions like the Lawrence Welk show that followed in its footsteps.

Due to a unique collaboration between the Regional History Collection and the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra, the "blast of the mill whistle" that signaled the start of the show sounded once again in Wheeling earlier this year. Intent on honoring the program in some fashion, Susan Hogan, executive director of the Wheeling Symphony, contacted curator John Cuthbert last year seeking access to the program's archives. Hogan and Cuthbert's collaboration quickly evolved into more than a simple tribute. Drawing upon original music and dialog from the program's archives, a full blown historical reenactment was developed which chronicled 'Its Wheeling Steel's' incredible nine-year lifespan.



Reading the script, left to right, are C.J. Farnsworth, John Cuthbert, Hal O'Leary, and Steve Mazur.

Including a cast of hundreds — local actors, amateur musicians, the *Pride of the Valley Barbershop Chorus*, the touring vocal troupe *Five By Design*, and the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra — "Remembering 'It's Wheeling Steel'" brought this remarkable radio show back to life once again. The April 20, 2006 performance broke a decade-long attendance record for the Wheeling Symphony, drawing in an audience of approximately 2,000. According to Hogan, "Everyone in the theater, whether octogenarian or 30-somethings, felt the energy and power of the great music performed over the many years of 'It's Wheeling Steel.' People are still talking about it on the street, and they will continue to do so for a long time."

Longfellow wrote that "History casts its shadow far into the land of song." In this instance, it was the land of song's history that cast its shadow on the present, resurrecting a bygone era when tube cutters and stenographers were the American idols of the day. Though the age of such wholesome and heartwarming entertainment is unfortunately long past, those who wish to step back in time can do so thanks to the 'It's Wheeling Steel' archives in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection.



The cast of "Remembering 'Its Wheeling Steel,'" April 20, 2006.

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Anna M. Schein, Associate Curator, West Virginia and Regional History Collection.

**Anna M. Schein Named Associate Curator,
Printed Ephemera Collection**

The West Virginia and Regional History Collection recently welcomed a distinguished new member to the department's curatorial ranks. A 32-year veteran of the WVU Libraries, Anna M. Schein has joined the Collection as Associate Curator in charge of the voluminous Printed Ephemera Collection. Her engagement is destined to transform a significant component of the Collection that, despite its riches, is too often overlooked.

Estimated to contain more than 100,000 pieces, the PEC's contents range from pamphlets, brochures and isolated periodicals to news clippings, event programs, advertisements, menus and more. The foundations of this treasure trove date back to the early history of the West Virginia Collection, a time when the quantity of such publications was quite manageable in comparison to the myriad issues of the present day. The labor intensive manner initially employed to organize and catalog the collection was abandoned as impractical nearly two decades ago rendering the existing catalog increasingly obsolescent. The new curator's assignment will include developing a modern streamlined, automated finding aid, converting the old catalog and processing the immense backlog of materials that currently exists.

Ms. Schein is well equipped to undertake this task. During the 1970s she served as a Senior Cataloger in the WVU Libraries and played a leading role in implementing the Libraries' OCLC computerized cataloging system. She subsequently served as Head of

the Libraries' Periodicals Department for more than two decades. She has published bibliographic data in local, state, and national catalogs and has extensive experience with Library of Congress Subject Headings, MARC cataloging, the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules and the American National Standards for Recording Serial Holdings.

In announcing her appointment, Frances O'Brien, Dean of West Virginia University Libraries noted, "The Libraries have a wealth of special collections, archives, and manuscripts that require professional attention before students and faculty can access them. Anna's expertise in technical services will be a valuable resource for the West Virginia and Regional History Collection as it strives to increase access to its rich and extensive holdings."

Anna also brings considerable scholarly expertise to the Regional History Collection, particularly in the field of Native American Studies. Her recent publications include *White Pine Spirit of Peace: the WVU Peace Tree*, edited by Anna M. Schein (2005), and *Treaty of Canandaigua 1794: 200 Years of Treaty Relations between the Iroquois Confederacy and the United States*, edited by G. Peter Jemison and Anna M. Schein (2000).

Selected Recent Accessions:

Browse, Thomas, Family. Papers, 1830-1930, 7 ft. 6 in., Gift, 2006. A&M 3532.

Papers of the Thomas Browse family documenting immigration from England to the Ohio River region in the vicinity of Ohio, western Virginia, and Kentucky (1830); farming in Pleasants County, West Virginia in the vicinity of St. Marys on the Ohio River (ca. 1830s-1900); and the acquisition of and royalties from oil lands in Pleasant County from the region of "Fish Pot" (ca. 1880s-1910). Includes diaries of Thomas Browse (1830-1878) and diaries of his daughter Mary E. Browse (1855-1910, incomplete). Also includes family papers of descendants Robert H. Browse and Henry Nicholas Browse documenting services purchased and business transactions conducted along the Ohio River in the region of the towns of St. Marys, New Martinsville, and Wheeling (ca. 1880-1930).

The diaries of Thomas Browse consist of daily entries documenting in vivid detail his experiences in immigrating to America from England and running a farm in Pleasants County in western Virginia. The diaries record his land speculation activities in the Ohio Valley (in Ohio, western Virginia, and Kentucky) upon his arrival in the area including listings of land values and buildings. The names of people with whom he engaged in business are also recorded as are the names of steamboats. Later records include lists of goods produced (such as corn, apples, wool, etc.), on the Browse farm, sales of goods and their values, and later land transactions. Personal and recreational events are also recorded. The Civil War appears to have little effect on Browse as there are few Civil War related entries. There is mention in the entry of July 23, 1863, of the posting of men of the 88th Ohio Regiment under Lieutenant Howe in St. Marys in order to intercept Morgan's Cavalry during his famous raid north. About 20 of these men were fed by the Browse household.

The diaries of Mary E. Browse record life on the Browse estate including documentation of farm work and business, but also including references to household activities and chores. Her diary of 1855 vividly records a sea voyage from New York to Liverpool in order to visit relatives in England.

The papers of Robert H. Browse include extensive documentation of oil land acquisition in Pleasants County, including oil deeds, leases, plats, and royalty documents from ca. 1880-1910.

Chisler, Wayne J. World War II Correspondence, 1942-1945, 7 in., Acquired, 2006. A&M 3528.

Two hundred World War II letters from Private Wayne J. Chisler, a quartermaster, to his wife Elsie Pullman Chisler, both from Morgantown, West Virginia. Letters discuss camp life, entertainment (including music, movies, sports), and sentiments. Wayne Chisler went to boot camp at Fort Lee, Virginia in July to September of 1942, and then proceeded to the embarkation center of Fort Lawton, Washington state in September, 1942. He was deployed to a base on Umnak, the easternmost island of the chain of islands in Alaska known as the Aleutians, serving there through 1944. The letters from Umnak all originate from APO 948 (Army Post Office). There are only four letters from 1945, three to Elsie Chisler from friends or family, and one to Wayne Chisler from a fellow soldier and friend. The letters also mention the progress of his wife working in a defense plant in Baltimore, Maryland. There are two photographs of, presumably, Elsie Chisler, including one negative and one print.

DeLancy, Anna Santore. Scrapbooks and Yearbooks, 1921-1941, 9 in., Gift, 2006. A&M 3526.

Four scrapbooks (containing letters, photographs, clippings, greeting cards, ephemera, etc.) created by, and two yearbooks collected by Anna Santore DeLancy (1911-2001). Anna DeLancy was a Sunday School teacher at The Shack, a Presbyterian neighborhood house operating in Pursglove, West Virginia. She spent most of her life as a librarian in New York City. One scrapbook documents the missionary work of her friends Gerald and Sylvia Zimmer in Tungjen in Kweichow, China during the period 1936-1941. They were missionaries from the Spruce Street Methodist Church in Morgantown, West Virginia. It includes over 35 lengthy and detailed letters authored by Sylvia Zimmer regarding her experiences as a missionary, describing interactions with the local population (including children, officials, etc.), local customs and religious practices (including Taoism and Buddhism), the natural landscape, problems with bandits, and the effects of the Japanese invasion of China, among other topics. The remaining three scrapbooks document the life of Anna DeLancy and her husband Charles DeLancy (an engineering student at West Virginia University) in the areas of Jefferson, Greene County, Pennsylvania, and Morgantown, West Virginia, during the period of ca. 1921-1938. There are two yearbooks: 1) "The Jeffersonian, 1927" for Jefferson High School, Jefferson, PA; 2) "The Eagle, 1927" for South Union High School of Uniontown, PA.

Ford, Adah Haldeman, Suffragist. Papers, 1900-1970, 3 ft. 4 in., Acquired, 2006. A&M 3537.



A booming Grafton, WV, ca. 1905.

Papers of Ada Haldeman Ford, women's suffragist of Taylor County, West Virginia. Includes reminiscence, letters, and clippings documenting Ada Haldeman Ford's active role as a suffragist in Taylor County through 1920. There are also clippings and other materials regarding political matters dating through 1970. There are photographs and genealogies regarding the Ford and Haldeman families, and a collection of books (including bibles, foreign language textbooks, poetry, etc.). Artifacts include suffrage-era 48-star U.S. flags scaled to a size convenient for hand portability.

Foster, Ruel, Professor of English. Papers, 1906-1991, 2 ft. 4 in., Gift, 2006. Addendum to A&M 3461.

Papers of Ruel Foster, a former professor of English and Chairman of the English Department, West Virginia University. Includes material related to author Thomas Wolfe and an extensive series of correspondence with acclaimed Appalachian writer Jesse Stuart. Also includes records related to the publication of Foster's book on Jesse Stuart in Twayne's United States Author Series, a photographic portrait of Jesse Stuart, and other records related to Stuart. There is also a manuscript by author Davis Grubb of his stage adaptation of his novel "The Night of the Hunter" with signed manuscript cover letter to Foster by Grubb discussing this adaptation, with reference to actress Lillian Gish.

Goff, Thomas E. Outdoor Sports Artifacts and Records, 1930-2005, 8 ft. 9 in., Gift, 2006. A&M 3520.

Collection of Thomas E. Goff of Morgantown relating to fly tying and archery. Includes two bamboo fly rods, fly tying equipment and supplies, flies, two creels, three bows, leather finger tips and arm guards, a quiver, and arrows. Also includes 103 issues of a Goffs/Goughs family genealogical newsletter (1983-2003), and 6 issues of a Van Schaick family genealogical newsletter (2000-2005). There are photographs of Thomas E. Goff and family and friends from ca. 1930-1980, including fishing and camping scenes (most are sepia-toned). Thomas E. Goff (1910-1985) was born in Cowen, Webster County.

His family moved to Morgantown in 1920 where he became involved in aviation, boxing, and wrestling. He married in 1936, lived on Beechurst Avenue, and worked in a glass factory. At one time he was a forest ranger. He made and sold sports equipment, and for a time owned Goff's Eastern Streams. His laminated bows were made of osage orange. He was a member of the West Virginia Archery Association.

Golden, Marvin, Compiler. Diaries, 1925-1961, 5 in., Purchase, 2006. A&M 3531.

Eight five-year diaries by Marvin Golden (born 1900) of West Virginia from 1925-1961 documenting his training and years as a teacher in West Virginia (1925-1942), and his years of service in the U.S. Army in World War II, the Korean War, and beyond (1942-1957). Entries are brief and without depth, highlighting on a daily basis events of significance or interest to the author. The diaries contain over 2500 pages and over 12,000 entries. There is also an Honorable Discharge dated January 19, 1919 evidencing Golden's service in World War I, and an annotated copy of "Statement of Service for Basic Pay" documenting his total years of military service.

Griffith, Mabel Marie, Compiler. Scrapbooks, 1903-1929, 4 in., Acquired, 2006. A&M 3530.

Two scrapbooks (10 in. x 13 in.) compiled by Mabel Marie Griffith (born February 28, 1896) documenting her life in Morgantown, West Virginia in the period 1914-1926, including her personal and family life, education (Morgantown High School and West Virginia University), and her attendance of athletic, musical, and theatrical events. There is documentation of the effects of World War I on Morgantown, Redpath Chautauqua, the impact of the influenza epidemic on the family of Charles Holt (the brother of Mabel Griffith's mother,



Fly fisherman Thomas Goff, ca. 1930s.

recorded in a newspaper clipping), and Mabel Griffith's wedding to Rudolph Stoyer (October 10, 1920). There are illustrations (clipped and pasted into the scrapbook), photographs, clippings, programs, postcards, grade school report cards, and ephemera. Ephemera includes calling cards, dance cards, and greeting cards.

Kane, Leslie. Slides of Morgantown and Film of Hospital Groundbreaking, 1945-1980, 5 in., Gift, 2006. A&M 3524.

One hundred slides by Morgantown resident Leslie Kane of Morgantown and West Virginia University subjects, including Mountaineer Football. There are a few slides of Pittsburgh. There is also a 16mm motion picture film of the groundbreaking of West Virginia University Hospital and Medical School.

Linder, O.D., Compiler. Genealogy Records Regarding the Boyce, Dever, Gibson, and Linder Families, 1800-2000, 14 ft., Gift, 2006. A&M 3529.

Genealogy records regarding the Boyce, Dever, Gibson, Linder, and related families in the area of West Virginia, Maryland, and Virginia. Includes card index to cemetery records by name and cemetery (boxes 1-2), cemetery records (box 3), genealogy records by notebook number (boxes 4-6), genealogy records by family name (boxes 7-8), genealogy records by county (boxes 8-9), miscellaneous records (box 9), subjects (includes grade and attendance book, Blueville School, Sub-District No. 48, Grades 2-3, 1935-1936; dues ledger of Mt. Union Church, Taylor County, WV, 1898-1917; microfilm [2 reels] and index to pedigree charts 1-999 from the Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society [SGES]; typescript narrative history of Blueville, WV; and genealogy charts) (box 10), highway maps by the WV Department of Highways (for Marion [1962] Monongalia [1962, 1980], Taylor [1964], and Harrison [1962] Counties) (box 11), reproduction maps of Fairfax and Fauquier Counties, Virginia, in the 18th to 19th centuries (roll tubes 12-14), reproduction maps of North Carolina in the 16th to 19th centuries (roll tube 15), and microfilm of genealogy related records.

Photographs, Camp Crawford. Prints, 1934, 19 items, Gift, 2006.

Photographs of Camp Crawford, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in Elizabeth, Wirt County. This was a base for Company 1512 in the Charleston District, Fifth Corps Area. Includes a total of 19 photographs of facilities and personnel including Clyde Paul Evans. Several of the photographs depict the camp during floods of the Little Kanawha River. One picture features an officer, two depict musicians, and one an automobile.



A CCC camp string band, Elizabeth, WV, 1934.

Snuffer, Ewell, Mine Foreman and Inspector. Diaries, 1955-1997, 2 ft., Gift, 2006. A&M 3519.

Diaries of Ewell Snuffer, a foreman and inspector of coal mines. The diaries document his professional and personal activities. There are for example entries documenting mine fires (Osage Mine in April 1965 and Mars in October 1965), explosions, natural gas leaks, etc., as well as more routine work activities. As a resident of Morgantown, many entries document places and events in Morgantown, as well as West Virginia in general. An avid golfer, he records golf courses visited, games played, tournaments, and scores; score cards can be found interleaved in the diaries. Ewell Snuffer also recorded major historical events of his time along with brief comments, such as the Vietnam War and President Nixon's resignation. There is a four-page autobiography and a five-page history of Bolt, Raleigh County.

Topographic Maps. 1896-1913, 6 items, Acquired, 2006. Addendum to A&M 1721.

Six topographic maps by the US Geological Survey. 1) Buckhannon Sheet, 1896. 2) Raleigh Sheet, 1897. 3) Kanawha Falls Sheet, 1897. 4) Charleston Quadrangle, 1899. 5) Logan Quadrangle, 1913. 6) Beckley Quadrangle, 1913.

West Virginia University. College of Arts and Sciences. Screenplays by Millard Lampell, 1964-1997, 1 ft. 8 in., Gift, 2006. A&M 5105.

Screenplays and related material authored by Millard Lampell, an Emmy-winning writer (1966), novelist and songwriter. In 1950 during the McCarthy era he was blacklisted for refusing to tell the Senate Committee on Internal Security about his political affiliations. For several years he was forced to use a pseudonym. Lampell helped form the pre-revival classic group,

Almanac Singers, a precursor to the Weavers. He was the author of two novels.

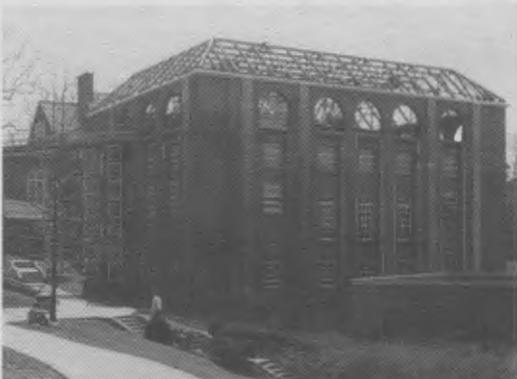
West Virginia University. President. Hardesty, Jr., David C. Papers, 1960-2006, 24 ft. 3 in., Transfer, 2006. A&M 5114.

Papers of President David C. Hardesty, Jr. of West Virginia University. Includes series of 1) Inauguration and Inception of Presidency, 2) Publications and Reports, 3) Athletics, 4) Clipping Notebooks, 5) Audio-Visual Material, and 6) Oversize. 1) Inauguration and Inception records include presidential search clippings, inaugural invitation cards, certificates of greeting from universities, Hardesty's inaugural address speech drafts, Hardesty's schedule (1995-1996), and clippings regarding first year of service (1995-1996). 2) Publications and Reports includes materials published by and about the University, including Statements of Presidential Assessment (1999, 2003), Self Study (2004), departmental reports, program prospectuses, etc. 3) Athletics records include West

Virginia University athletics publications, Big East press conference notebook (June 6, 2003), and Gator Bowl notebook (2004; includes tickets, schedule of events, etc.). 4) Clippings Notebooks include articles in newspapers and other publications regarding President Hardesty and West Virginia University (1995-2006). 5) Audio-Visual Material includes mostly news and public relations material regarding programs and events at West Virginia University. 6) Oversize includes Legislative Citations from the government of West Virginia, a framed letter from President William Jefferson Clinton (March 14, 2000), and original copies of news clippings regarding David C. Hardesty, Jr. and West Virginia University (1960s-1990s).

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Elizabeth Moore Hall, ca. 1961. See story page 1.