

Spring 2005

WVRHC Newsletter, Spring 2005

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West Virginia and Regional History Collection

NEWSLETTER

Volume 20, No. 2

West Virginia University Libraries

Spring 2005

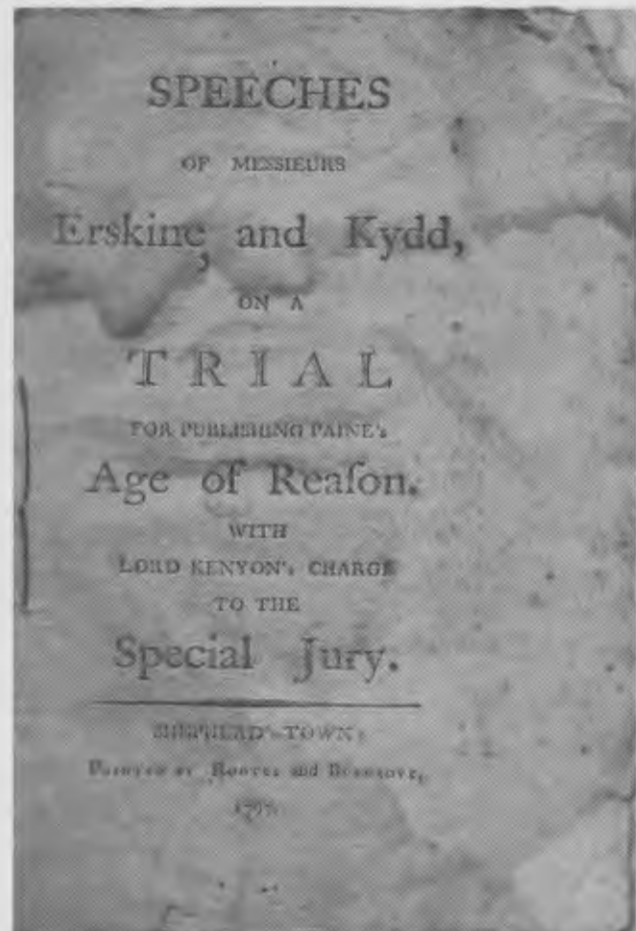
An Early West Virginia Imprint

Ask any Golden Horseshoe winner to name the first book published on West Virginia soil and it's likely that you'll receive a quick response — "*Christian Panoply*." Indeed!

Published in Shepherdstown, *Christian Panoply*, *Containing an Apology for the Bible in a Series of Letters Addressed to Thomas Paine...* is believed to have rolled off the printing press of Philip Rootes and Charles Blagrove in late 1797, earning its makers an enduring place in West Virginia history. Unfortunately, little more is known about the two pioneering printers other than that they were the proprietors of the short-lived Shepherdstown newspaper *The Impartial Observer*. Commenced on June 28, 1797, and surviving for just over six months, only two issues of the *Observer* survive today.

At some 332 pages, *Christian Panoply* represents quite a remarkable first foray into book publishing even if flaws like irregular page sizes and changing type faces bear witness to the fact that its makers were novice bookmakers. But how new to the trade were they really? And is the *Christian Panoply* really the first West Virginia book?

A recent acquisition by the West Virginia and Regional History Collection calls these long accepted notions into question. Titled *Speeches of Messieurs Erskine and Kydd on a Trial for Publishing Paine's Age of Reason*, the slim volume was published by Rootes and Blagrove in the very same year as *Christian Panoply*. Like *Christian Panoply*, the publication's content stems from the debate over one of the most controversial topics of the age — Thomas Paine's "blasphemous" treatise *The Age of Reason*.



Speeches of Erskine and Kydd was one of dozens of publications relating to the controversy over Paine's The Age of Reason.

The American revolutionary patriot famous for the phrase "These are the times that try men's souls," Thomas Paine was born in England in 1737. A brilliant thinker but a grammar school dropout, Paine was somewhat of a ne'er-do-well early in life. He had

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floundered through assorted trades and ventures before emigrating to America in 1774 at the suggestion of Benjamin Franklin who he met in London.

Settling in Philadelphia, Paine quickly made his mark in the field of journalism in his new home through his writings in support of the cause of American independence. His January 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense* was reportedly read by virtually every literate citizen in the colonies. George Washington found the first issue of his subsequent series of pamphlets, *The Crisis* (1776-1783), to be so inspiring that he ordered that it be read by his troops. Together, these publications were of overwhelming importance in uniting Americans behind the quest for freedom.

During the late 1780s, Paine returned to London where he dabbled as an inventor and continued his writings on the principles of egalitarianism and humanism. A man whose thinking was far ahead of his time, his 1791 treatise *The Rights of Man* broke new ground in the field of human rights not only in its repudiation of all forms of autocratic rule but also in its advocacy of social responsibility including entitlement programs for the poor and elderly similar to those we know today as welfare and social security. (The U.S. Social Security Administration acknowledges Paine's contributions in the latter regard in all accounts of the agency's history.)

Threatened with arrest for espousing such seditious notions, Paine was forced to flee the country upon publication of *The Rights of Man* in 1792. Landing in Paris, he soon found himself in greater jeopardy there than he had been in London. Though *The Age of Reason* was inspired by and fully supportive of the French Revolution, when Paine declared publicly that Louis XVI should be spared the guillotine for humanitarian reasons ("Kill the king, but not the man") he was promptly thrown in jail. At the direction of the merciless revolutionary leader Robespierre, he himself was sentenced to the very fate he had argued against.

It was while he was in prison, fearing no greater consequence than what already lay ahead, that Paine

completed the first part of his most controversial work, *The Age of Reason* (1794). A blunt assault on the Judeo-Christian religion, the book called upon readers to reject the Bible, a "cruel" and "wretched contrivance," and look instead for evidence of God in the miracles of nature, science and human reason. While such "Deist" thoughts were welcomed by the intellectual followers of The Enlightenment, faithful Christians everywhere were outraged.



Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

Paine escaped the guillotine through an oversight in the manner in which prisoners were marked for execution. He was eventually released into the custody of future U.S. president James Monroe, who was then serving as Minister to France. While recuperating in Monroe's home, Paine completed the second part of his controversial treatise on religion.

When copies of *The Age of Reason*, Part II, first surfaced in London in 1796, the book was considered so profane that authorities immediately took action to suppress its circulation. Since the book was printed anonymously, a bookseller named Thomas Williams was arrested for "publishing" it (i.e. making it public) by selling a single copy. The unfortunate bookseller soon found himself a pawn in a battle that pitted the freedoms of thought, speech and free press against the King of England who was sworn to defend the Christian faith.

"King vs. Williams" came to trial in June 1797. Prosecutor Thomas Erskine, a man who had formerly defended Paine's right to free speech in an earlier trial regarding *The Rights of Man*, this time held that the author's latest work was both blasphemous and subversive. Furthermore, he charged, the book was entirely counterproductive to its professed goal of promoting civil liberty since Christianity was the very force from which all civil liberties flowed. Counsel for the defense Stephen Kydd countered by arguing that the book was not meant to be subversive. It simply represented the right of one man "to exercise the powers of his mind in discussing controversial points of religion" so that others might consider his views on the nature of the Supreme Being in which he, the author, was himself a devout, if unorthodox, believer. And given the fact that the book had only noble intent, the act of selling it could hardly be characterized as a criminal activity.

As might be expected, this case received close attention from the press in England and America.

Accounts of the trial and excerpts of the speeches of both barristers appeared quickly in London newspapers and in the United States not long afterwards. Publication of the *Speeches of Erskine and Kydd* in their entirety soon followed.

The Rootes and Blagrove imprint of the *Speeches* represents one of at least three American editions of which at least one issue survives. The others were printed in Philadelphia and Newark. It is likely that there were more American editions that have not survived due to the ephemeral nature of the publication.

Indeed, the issue acquired by the West Virginia Collection is possibly the only evidence of the Shepherdstown edition. There is no mention of the publication in the bible of early West Virginia printing, Norona and Shetler's *West Virginia Imprints (1790-1863)*, nor is it mentioned in other comprehensive bibliographic sources like the *National Union Catalog* and *National Index to American Imprints*.

Measuring approximately 4" by 7" inches, the little volume is composed of 22 pages, the last leaf of which is torn, top to bottom, with the outer half missing. Based upon the evidence of surviving editions from other cities, it is evident that a final leaf containing page 23 and a back cover are also absent. Yet, what remains is in remarkably good condition considering its age including the integrity of the thin, single thread, hand-sewn binding.

Does 22 pages (originally 23-24) constitute a book? And does this publication pre-date the *Christian Panoply*? The answer to the first question is perhaps a matter of semantics. The standard definition of a book is certainly broad enough to encompass this slight tome. Yet the definition of a pamphlet — "a short treatise or essay" often on "a controversial subject" and "generally less than 80 pages, stitched and usually enclosed in paper covers" — fits like a glove.

The answer to the second question is more illusive. Though it is certain that the *Speeches* were printed in some venues prior to the presumed late 1797 publication date of the *Christian Panoply*, the date of the Shepherdstown edition cannot be definitively ascertained on the basis of the information at hand. But it is perhaps a moot point anyway since this is really not a book. Nor is this the first pamphlet published within the present day borders of the state. That distinction belongs to Nathaniel Willis's 15 page *A Letter from Miss S—a to Mrs. R—, who on her way to Bath, Visited Saint Rozo Villozo! The most Celebrated Personage in this Part of the country, and now Residing near Sharpsburg*, which was issued in Shepherdstown in 1791.

Nevertheless, the Rootes and Blagrove *Speeches of Erskine and Kydd* may be counted among the rarest of the incunabula of West Virginia imprints as well as one of the singular treasures of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection.

Oh, and as to the outcome of "King vs. Williams" — the King prevailed, the book was banned, and the bookseller spent a year in jail!

Dorothy Davis Endowment Established in Honor of Noted Harrison County Educator and Historian

Dorothy Davis spent the better part of her ninety years unraveling the mysteries of Harrison County history. In honor of her many achievements in that effort, a WVU Libraries endowment bearing her name will provide funds to support the continuation of her work in perpetuity. The endowment which will support the acquisition and preservation of historical materials pertaining to the history of Clarksburg and its environs was established in January 2005 with a founding gift by David G. Allen of Clarksburg.

Born in Clarksburg in 1914, Davis attended West Virginia University from 1930 to 1934. Upon graduation she found employment teaching in the Harrison County public schools. She continued in that endeavor for the next 37 years. In addition to English, she taught drama and produced more than 50 class plays and pageants during the course of her long career. Yet another passion was state and local history. Her interests converged when she was commissioned to write and produce a pageant regarding the early history of Harrison County as part of the West Virginia Centennial celebration in 1963. Titled "Out of the Whirlwind," the pageant ran for seven consecutive nights and was widely acclaimed.

In 1970, Davis published a monumental *History of Harrison County, West Virginia* consisting of nearly 1000 pages. Establishing her as the preeminent authority on the subject, the book continues to serve as the definitive work on this important county. Other local history publications by Davis include a biography of one of Harrison County's most significant pioneers, *John*



Dorothy Belle Upton Davis (1914-2005)

George Jackson (1976), as well as more than fifty historical sketches and articles which appeared in the Harrison County Historical Society *Newsletter* and in Clarksburg newspapers.

An avid supporter of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at the WVU Libraries, Davis served as a founding member of the Collection's Visiting Committee in 1984. Her association with the organization continued until her death in 2004. According to director John Cuthbert, Davis's expertise in regional heritage included a mastery of traditional Appalachian foodways. "I never had the opportunity of tasting her infamous groundhog pie, but I enjoyed her salt-rising bread and homemade apple butter on many occasions. She brought both in periodically for the whole department to share. She will be part of our institutional memory for many years to come."

In establishing this endowment in honor of his friend and mentor, David Allen has created a permanent tribute to Davis that will provide funding in perpetuity to continue the work to which she dedicated so much of her effort. Others who wish to contribute to the Dorothy Davis Endowment may do so by contacting the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at Box 6069, Morgantown, WV, 26506, telephone 304 293 3536.

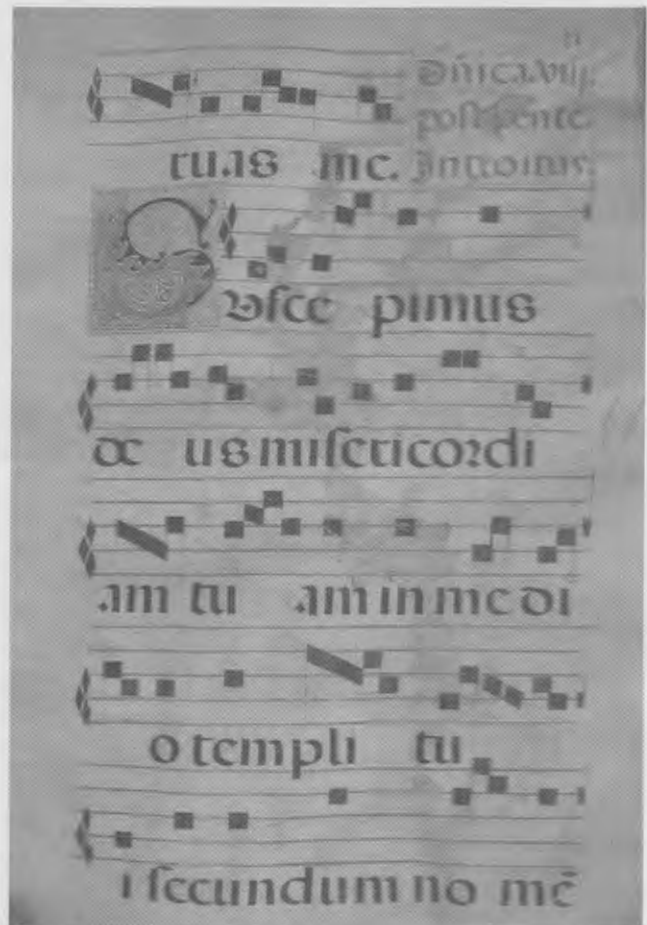
William VanVliet Bacon Rare Books Accession

William VanVliet Bacon loved books! Born in Ridgefield, New Jersey in 1912, but raised in Goshen, New York, Bacon became an avid reader as a young child and never stopped. His fondness for literature and book collecting had become so passionate by the time he entered Princeton at age 18 that his instructors soon came to wonder why he was majoring in chemical engineering. Indeed, by then the young bibliophile was well-known to many in the book trade — in the book shops of New York City, as well as in the halls of Sotheby's auction where he often bid as an agent for wealthy collectors like the Rockefellers.

Despite his professors' concern, Bacon proved earnest in his scientific studies, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1934. Following an additional year of postgraduate work, he accepted employment as a chemical engineer with Westvaco corporation in South Charleston, West Virginia. He remained with the company and its successor, FMC, for the next 42 years, rising from the position of "cadet foreman" to plant manager and chief material and inspection engineer in the corporation's Chlor-Alkali division. It was a distinguished career that included contributions to scientific journals and participation in many professional organizations and activities locally and nationally.

Yet, all the while, Bacon's passion for books remained. By the time of his death in 2002, his personal collection had grown to more than 5000 volumes. A choice group of over 150 of the rarest and most valuable items selected from this immense body was recently donated to the West Virginia and Regional History Collection and Special Collections' Rare Books Collection by the collector's family.

The primary emphasis of the books rests in the fields of British and American literature of the late 17th to early 20th centuries, complementing the existing strength of the Rare Books Collection. British imprints of especial rarity include a limited edition of William Morris's *The Wood Beyond the World*, printed on handmade paper and bound in vellum. Also of note are James Dallaway's *Constantinople: Ancient and Modern* of 1797 and a two volume English edition of the works of the Roman poet Horace printed in London in 1733. American literary treasures include several early editions of works by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and John Greenleaf Whittier as well as an extraordinary collector's edition of a work by Walt Whitman that was formerly owned by the noted American naturalist John Burroughs.



Measuring roughly 2 x 2.5 feet when opened wide, the Bacon Missale Romanum dates from an age when choirs sang from a single volume.

The most valuable item in the collection is neither English nor American but of Spanish origin. It is also the oldest and the largest – a two-volume "elephant folio" (denoting its size) "Missale Romanum" containing chants for the Roman Catholic mass. Made in a monastery around the year 1422, the pair of volumes contain a total of nearly 400 vellum pages, each meticulously hand-inscribed with Latin text in gothic script, musical notation and profuse decoration. Measuring nearly two feet tall by two and a half feet wide (when opened), the books are bound in calves' leather over oak boards, sewn together by half-inch braided rope. Their immense size reflects their production for use in an age, prior to the invention of printing, when church choirs sang from a single hymnal.

Also included among the Bacon accession is a small but exquisite group of books of regional interest including seven early volumes devoted to the Virginia mineral springs. In addition to a fine copy of J.J. Moorman's excellent 1859 study *The Virginia Springs and Springs of the South and West* are pioneering works on the subject such as Mark Pencil's *The White Sulphur Springs Papers* of 1839 and Peregrine Prolix's *Letters Descriptive of the Virginia Springs, the Roads Leading Thereto, and Doings Thereat* of 1835.

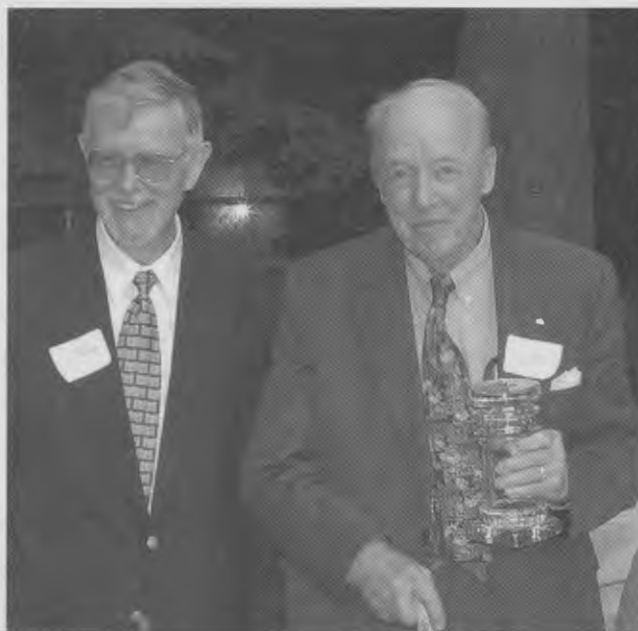


"A Bird's Eye View of the White Sulphur Springs" from Moorman's *The Virginia Springs* (1859).

As a group the William VanVliet Bacon Rare Books Accession constitutes the most significant addition to the Rare Books Collection since the founding gift of the Arthur S. Dayton Collection more than a half century ago. We wish to express our gratitude to the heirs of Mr. Bacon for this wonderful gift that will surely benefit students and scholars for many generations to come.

In Memorium

West Virginia history, and indeed the state of West Virginia, lost one of its greatest champions when Joseph C. Jefferds Jr. passed away on February 11, 2005. A devoted member of the WVU Libraries Visiting Committee for nearly 20 years, Jefferds was an exceptional man who accomplished much during his long and distinguished career as businessman, historian, philanthropist and citizen.



Joe Jefferds (right), winner of the WV Humanities Council's 2003 Charles Daugherty Award, poses with the award's namesake.

A lifelong resident of Charleston, Joe left the state only briefly during his 85 years — to attain a degree in engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1940) and to serve his nation during World War II. Achieving distinction in both activities, he returned to the Kanawha Valley to found Jefferds Corporation in 1947 (initially Jefferds and Moore) which he built into one the leading industrial equipment outfitters in the nation.

Joe's business acumen and genial nature led to countless professional memberships and appointments. He served on major corporate boards including Bell Atlantic and United Bankshares and held the presidency of business and community organizations including the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, the Charleston Rotary Club, the Edgewood Country Club, and the Cosmos Club. His passion for education generally, and West Virginia history particularly, led to his involvement in myriad activities related to those fields. The author of books on *Captain Matthew Arbuckle* and Charleston's *St. John's Episcopal Church*, he was a trustee of the

University of Charleston, the WVU Institute of Technology, and the West Virginia Graduate College Foundation; a president of the West Virginia Board of Education and West Virginia Humanities Council; and a director of the West Virginia Historical Education Foundation and the West Virginia Department of Culture and History Foundation. The list goes on!

Joe joined the Visiting Committee for the West Virginia and Regional History Collection shortly after the Committee's founding during the mid 1980s and never left. During that twenty year period his contributions were many including participating as a West Virginia Day speaker, and serving as an advocate for the Regional History Collection in the Kanawha Valley in which role he steered several fine manuscripts collections our way.

As the above brief lines suggest, Joe Jefferds had few equals, not only in the breadth of his interests and influence, but in the generosity of his spirit and in the boundless energy he summoned in achieving and contributing so much for the benefit of so many. One could hardly aspire for more than to emulate his example.

**Visiting Committee
West Virginia Historical Art Collection and
Special Collections
West Virginia University Libraries**

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John E. Stealey, III, Shepherdstown

Richard R. Strother, Washington, DC

Dr. Hubert Martin, Morgantown

Diane Hackney-Oliver, Charleston

Selected Recent Acquisitions:

Franklin Farm Women Club. Records, 1949-1959. 2 in. Acquired, 2004. A&M 3479.

Records of the Franklin (Pendleton County) Farm Women Club; includes financial records and two directories.

Greenbrier County, Slaves and Slavery. Records, 1827-1830. 1 in. Acquired, 2004. A&M 3478.

Group of six manuscripts, 26 total pages, dated 1827-1830, regarding a court case, *Benjamin Green vs. Robert Kelly*, involving the determination of a slave's value for one year of work in Lewisburg, Greenbrier County.

Holt Family Collection. Papers, 1866-2004. 6 ft. 8 in. Gift, 2005. A&M 1701 Add.

Records documenting the professional and personal activities of U.S. Senator Rush Dew Holt (1905-1955), his wife Helen Holt, and their son U.S. Congressman Rush Dew Holt, Jr. The majority of the records pertain to the career of Helen Holt, who served as Secretary of State for the State of West Virginia, in the West Virginia House of Delegates, and under the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford administrations, in the Federal Housing Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The collection includes correspondence, clippings, newsletters, programs, invitations and photographs dating primarily from 1930-1990.

Hopper, Captain J.C. Papers, 1862. 4 items. Acquired, 2004. A&M 3481.

Four documents from the papers of Captain J. C. Hopper, aide-de-camp to General J.C. Fremont, while in command of the Mountain Department in West Virginia early in the Civil War. Includes: 1) Captured Confederate spy report, 2pp.: "TROOPS IN LARGE NUMBERS arriving. Over 80,000 volunteers have reached here. On the 3'rd 10,000 soldiers and on the 5'th 12,000 more left for Virginia by way of Rockville, Point of Rocks, Edwards Ferry and the other side." 2) Report regarding possible Confederate spy, 1p.: "Capt. Higgins, Company B, 73'rd O.V.I., Schwenk's Brigade - on previous expedition found a fine meal ready for a number of persons, but no guests at the Widow Eyes on Harrisonburg road." 3) U.S. military telegraph regarding horses. 4) Printed general order by General Fremont regarding lost or strayed horses.



Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1932 at age 29, Holt had to wait nearly a half year before reaching the qualifying age of 30 that enabled him to serve.

Howard, Gilbert Wayne. "Fiddle Songs and Banjo Songs: A Description and Index." Thesis, 1981. 1 vol. Gift, 2005. A&M 3483.

Thesis regarding folk music, Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky. 218pp.

Newton, W.S., Surgeon. Letter, 1864. 4pp. Acquired, 2004. A&M 3482.

Four page letter regarding arrest of a Chief Army Surgeon for selling U.S. Army hospital stores to Winchester druggists; authored by Army Surgeon W.S. Newton to his wife from "Headquarters 2nd Infantry Division Hospital, Army of West Virginia, Nov. 29, 1864." He writes: "The only thing of interest now is something repugnant to every honorable medical man's mind. It is the arrest of one of the most prominent of our medical officers, the Surgeon-in-Chief of our division. The Court to try the case convened today. J.M. Robinson [who] has messed and slept with me since Sept. is the man. While at Winchester, after the battle 19 September he was in charge of all hospitals of our corps, seven in all, and while there it seems, he sold the drugs and Hospital Stores drawn from the Medical purveyor to druggists of Winchester and committed other irregularities contrary to the good of the Service."

O.W. Gray & Son, Philadelphia. Maps of West Virginia. Maps, 1879. 5 items. Acquired, 2005.

Five Maps: 1) Gray's New Map of Clarksburg, Harrison Co., West Virginia; published by O.W. Gray & Son, Philadelphia, 1879 (17.25" H x 28.25" W). 2) Gray's New Map of Weston, Lewis Co., West Virginia; published by O.W. Gray & Son, Philadelphia, 1879 (17" H x 27" W). 3) Gray's New Map of Morgantown, Monongalia Co., West

Virginia; published by O.W. Gray & Son, Philadelphia, 1879 (17.25" H x 28.75" W). 4) Gray's New Map of Wheeling, Ohio Co., West Virginia and Bridgeport and Martin's Ferry, Belmont Co., Ohio; published by O.W. Gray & Son, Philadelphia, 1879 (17.25" H x 28.25" W). 5) Gray's New Map of Fairmont and Palatine, Marion Co., West Virginia; published by O.W. Gray & Son, Philadelphia, 1879 (17.25" H x 29" W)

Pearson, Joseph. Diaries, 1861-1862. 3 vols. Acquired, 2004. A&M 3477.

Group of three manuscript diaries containing a total of more than 300 pages, dated 27 Oct. 1861 to 6 Oct. 1862, of Sergeant Joseph Pearson of Company F, 44th Ohio Regiment. The unit was organized in October 1861 and moved into West Virginia where it was in operation until September 1862. Detailed entries include names of soldiers and their assignments, sick leave lists, and guard and picket duty records. There is also a lengthy description of military action at Lewisburg, Greenbrier County on May 23, 1862.

Sayre, Ralph H., Mr. & Mrs., compilers. Genealogies, 2005. 1 compact disk. Gift, 2005. A&M 3120 Add.

One compact disk (CD) containing 21 files of Wayne County, West Virginia, genealogical information.

USS West Virginia. Photographs, 1907-1940. 2 items. Acquired, 2005. PPP.

Two photographs of the USS West Virginia including the armored cruiser (stereophoto) commissioned in 1905 and the battleship sunk at Pearl harbor in 1941.



Official U.S. Navy Photo of the USS West Virginia released to media on December 7, 1941.

Washington, George. Letter, 1859. 3pp. Acquired, 2004. A&M 3480.

Autograph letter signed, "Geo. Washington," Alexandria, Virginia, November 2, 1859, which reads in part: "What think you of the Harper's Ferry tragedy? You will see from the papers sent, that Brown has been convicted - he should die a dog's death, the one prescribed by the law is much too good & respectable for him. This man in my opinion is certainly deranged upon this particular subject - when interrogated about the enormity of his deeds, His answer 'I am an instrument in the hands of providence' & it is the best service man can render under God. I learn though friends from the spot, the excitement is very great & apprehensions are entertained the prisoners, will be rescued from the hands of the law & hung at once by the citizens of the place...."

WVU Personal Rapid Transit Records. Records, 2004. .25 in. Transfer, 2004. A&M 3359 Add.

Transcript of remarks made by Samy E.G. Elias, developer of the Personal Rapid Transit transportation system at West Virginia University, at the dedication of the Elias PRT Station.

West Virginia University. Mathematics Department Chairmen. Photographs, 1894-1972. 6 items. Transfer, 2005.

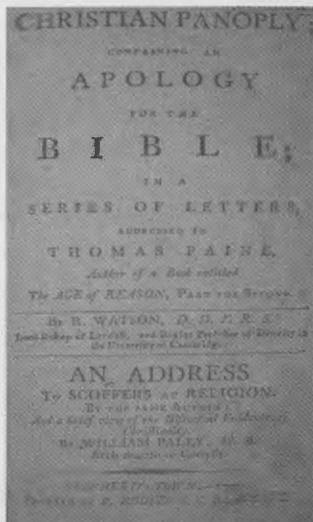
Six photographic portraits (11 in. x 14 in.) of West Virginia University Mathematics Department Chairmen. Includes James Scott Steward (1894-1907), Clarence Newton Reynolds, Jr. (1938-1946), Hannibal Albert Davis (1946-1960), Joseph Kyle Steward (1960-1965), Iland Dee Peters (1965-1967, 1972-1979), James Clifton Eaves (1967-1972).

World War II. Oral History Interviews. Records, 2005. 2 in. Gift, 2005. A&M 3426 Add.

Transcripts of 37 World War II oral history Veterans History Project interviews conducted in 2002 under the auspices of the Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library (a registered partner in the Library of Congress Veterans History Project) in the studios of WBOY-TV, Clarksburg, West Virginia. Interviewees, who chiefly resided in the Clarksburg/Bridgeport area at the time of their interview, include 32 veterans, a WAVE (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), an Army nurse, a USO (United Services Organization) entertainer, a Holocaust survivor and a war bride.

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*West Virginia's 1st book?
See story, page 1.*