The West Virginia and Regional History Collection's "Homecoming"

The old adage "home is where the heart is" comes to mind as the West Virginia and Regional History Collection prepares to return to the place from whence it sprang into existence approximately 70 years ago. After 22 years in its Colson Hall facility, the West Virginia Collection is moving during November and December into the Wise Library, which is being renovated as part of the new West Virginia University Downtown Campus Library complex.

The West Virginia Collection was officially established as the WVU Library Division of Documents in 1933. The Collection's first home was a large room atop the original five-story Wise Library structure, which opened in the fall of 1932. That room was transformed into an Appalachian Reading Room when five more stories were added to the building in 1950. At that time a West Virginia Collection reading room was established on level six, while storage for the archives was allocated on the tenth floor.

After nearly a half century in the Wise Library, the West Virginia Collection was removed to more spacious quarters in Colson Hall, former home of the WVU School of Law, in 1980. Though the space was attractive, the facility proved to have several drawbacks including environmental problems, lack of room for expansion and also the physical distance between the West Virginia Collection and other related WVU Library collections, including the Appalachian and history collections.

During the mid 1990s, when plans were made to construct a new downtown campus library immediately in front of the Wise Library, the Regional History Collection's needs were addressed by assigning the Collection a considerable portion of the original Wise building.

The Collection's new reading areas — one each for books and microfilm, rare books, and archives and manuscripts — will be located on the sixth floor. The Collection’s Microphotography and Duplication Services unit will be situated on level four, while modern art storage facilities are being constructed to house the West Virginia Historical Art
Collection on level five. The archives and manuscripts collections will be housed on levels seven through ten. In addition to many improvements in operations and reader services, including better access and security, enhanced microfilm reading and duplication capabilities and modern audio-visual equipment, the new facility will include a pair of exhibit galleries which will enable the West Virginia Collection to display its treasures on a regular basis for the first time in its history.

As it is anticipated that the Collection will be up and running by the beginning of January, all friends and users of the Regional History Collection are encouraged to place a visit to Wise Library high on their list of New Year’s resolutions.

A Checklist of Virginia Records in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection

Local researchers who have been planning a visit to the Virginia State Library might save themselves a trip to Richmond by checking the holdings of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection before departing. It comes as a serendipitous discovery to most to find that the West Virginia Collection holds more than 700 reels of microfilm containing early Virginia records, dating from 1623 to the early twentieth century. Including deeds, wills, land records, tax lists, marriages, muster and payrolls from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War, family histories, and so forth, the films are a vast treasure trove of information about the histories of many families who ultimately settled in or passed through West Virginia at any point during the state’s long history.

A Checklist of Virginia Records in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection is printed on pages 3-5 for the convenience of our readers.

Visiting Committee, West Virginia Historical Art Collection
James M. Guier, Chairman, New York, N.Y.
Amanda Cox, Charleston
J. Horror Davis IV, Charleston
William Maxwell Davis, Charleston
Elizabeth H. Guier, New York, N.Y.
Beth Hager, Harrisburg, Pa.
Joseph C. Jefferds, Jr., Charleston
Vaughn L. Kiger, Morgantown
Brooks McCabe, Charleston
Merle Moore, Webster Springs
John E. Stealey III, Shepherdstown
Richard R. Strother, Washington, D.C.
## Virginia Records in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection

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SELECTED RECENT ACCESSIONS


Three genealogies: (1) "Descendants of William Bayly"; 49 pages, ca. 1600-1995, through 11 generations. (2) "Descendants of William Pierce"; 50 pages, ca. 1575-1995, through 14 generations. (3) "Descendants of Johannes Weishaar" (Whitehair); 87 pages, ca. 1700-1995, through 11 generations.

Papers related to the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to Corporal Thomas W. Bennett of Morgantown for his service in the Vietnam War. Bennett distinguished himself under fire during the period 9 to 11 February 1969 when serving as a platoon medical aidman with the Second Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th infantry. Includes a letter from the U.S. Army to WVU regarding the display of the Medal of Honor (11/1/2000); a transcript of a speech delivered by WVU President David C. Hardesty at a ceremony honoring Bennett (11/3/2000); and a letter from President Hardesty to the Bennett Family regarding the display of the Medal at WVU (11/4/2000). There is also a photograph of an army unit and eyewitness statements regarding the actions that earned Bennett this Medal.


Documents recording the investigation by the U.S. Mine Safety & Health Administration into the Blacksville No. 1 Mine Explosion of 19 March 1992, Consolidation Coal Company, at Blacksville, West Virginia. Includes exhibit index, maps, and approximately 600 pages of interview transcripts.

Ephemera relating to the career of Robert L. Bland, an attorney in Weston, Lewis County. Includes: bills, checks, receipts (14 items; includes billings from the Weston Electric Light, Power and Water Co.); and telegrams and envelopes (7 items; 1901, 1919, 1922, 1935). Also includes 1859 court document verifying the free status of named mulattoes (under Chapter 7 of the Code of Virginia), and 1922 West Virginia University (WVU) grade report for student T.E. Bland.

A business ledger of Francis Christy, a tailor who worked in Fairmont, from 1837-1874. The ledger indicates the names of customers, the types of clothing Christy made or mended for them (including mostly coats, pants, and vests), and the dates of transactions and their costs. There are also three portraits of family members dating from ca. 1900-1920.

Records of Summers Methodist Church, Morgantown, WV. Includes deed, minutes, correspondence, financial records, cemetery readings, photographs, and applications for standard government headstones; ca. 1949-69, 2000-2002.

Cirkut Photographs, ca.1900-1930, 7 items. Acquired, 2002. PPP.
Seven cirkut photographs duplicated from the holdings of the Preston County Historical Society. Subjects include the Morgantown and Kingwood Railroad, the Greer Railroad, the WV Northern Railroad, and the Rodeheaver Lumber Co.

A genealogy of "Descendants of William Henry Dean" of Dorchester County, Maryland, ca. 1600 to 1900.

Two pocket diaries kept by U.S. Senator Stephen B. Elkins recording his activities in New York and Washington D.C. from 11/1882 to 5/1883. Included are many references to Ulysses S. Grant and James G. Blaine (who was nominated for U.S. President in 1884, and ran against Grover Cleveland).

Genealogy of the Emme Family, as descended from Johann Christoph Ludwig Taylor Emme. Includes data regarding family history 1798-1972.

Papers of Ethel Fike Friend, a public school teacher who spent much of her life in Bruceton Mills, Preston County. Includes books, pamphlets, letters, cards, church records, photographs, and writings by Friend and other writers, mostly documenting the genealogy and churches of Preston County, WV, and Garrett County, Maryland; ca. 1920-2000.

World War II letters of U.S. Army Private John Wesley Tyler. While stationed in camps in Kentucky, Texas, and Washington (Fort Lewis) from March 1944 to March 1945, Tyler was trained to serve in the medical corps. He served in Germany from April to September 1945. Tyler extensively recorded his everyday experiences from the perspective of a Private while in the service. A letter of June 16, 1945 documents a tour of the Buchenwald prison camp.


A scrapbook of photocopies documenting the history of navigation along the Little Kanawha River, ca.1920-1995. Includes copies of magazine and newspaper articles, maps, photographs, manuscript transcriptions, poems, and other materials about early explorers, riverboats, barges and river traffic.


A chronological index to articles regarding the community of Scott's Run, Monongalia County, and neighboring areas (including Bertha, Osage, Chaplin, Pursglove, Liberty, Davis, Jere, Shriver, Bunker, and Cassville) which appeared in Morgantown newspapers between 1917 and 1952. The index provides short abstractions of newspaper articles, as well as article titles and page numbers. Subjects include: coal mining news (accidents, disasters, employment, unions, operators, specific mines, strikes, etc.); Depression related news (including the Arthurdale project, Eleanor Roosevelt’s visits to the community; miners relief, etc.); prohibition (including arrests for possession of liquor or moonshine); University High School (mostly football news); and incidental news (including accident and crime reports, and marriages, births, and deaths). Also included is an index to articles in Point Pleasant, WV newspapers from 1952-1956 concerning Hannan High School football.


A collection of photographs and negatives of subject matter located in Webster County, WV, ca. 1880-1930. Included are photos of general stores, hotels, automobiles, railroads, the timber industry, and recreation.


A “Proclamation for a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise by His Excellency, The Governor,” issued by Governor Jacob B. Jackson on November 27, 1884.


“First Annual Yearbook of the Woman's Club of Morgantown.” Includes lists of officers and committees, program for 1926-27, membership lists, constitution, and by-laws.

WVU. Biology Department. Records, 1900-1980, 5 ft.
"Christmas Greetings from Phi Epsilon Phi," WVU Biology Department chapter, ca. 1940. WVU Biology Department Records, A&M 5070.


Departmental records of the West Virginia University Biology Department with subgroups of records regarding Phi Epsilon Phi, the Terra Alta Biological Station, and the Southern Appalachian Botanical Club. Biology Department records include: faculty biographical information (including professors Bartholomew, Core, Leach, Nuttall, Strausbaugh), department newsletters, photographs (including faculty, students, facilities and landscapes), and correspondence concerning students who served in WWII. Phi Epsilon Phi fraternity records include: minutes, correspondence, clippings, a scrapbook, Wild Flower Day records, ca. 1929-50s. Terra Alta Biological Station records include: correspondence, minutes, reports, clippings, curriculum information, financial records, ca. 1950s-70s. Southern Appalachian Botanical Club records include: membership/dues books and financial records, ca. 1938-61.


Forty-five slides documenting construction projects at WVU, ca. 1955-1970. Six slides (ca. 1970) show five artist’s renditions of the Personal Rapid Transit System (PRT) and route of the PRT drawn over an aerial photograph. Thirty-nine slides document construction of the Basic Sciences Building by aerial photography, including a few aerials of the Morgantown area (ca. 1955).


Records of Lillian Waugh, a faculty member of the WVU Women’s Studies Center from 1986 to 2000. Included are directories of the Morgantown branch of the American Association of University Women (1998-2001); records of the WVU Women’s Centenary celebration at WVU; records of the Women’s Studies Center (1986-2000); records of the Council for Women’s Concerns (1977-81) and the Social Justice Council (1988-93); records of the West Virginia Alliance for Women’s Studies (WVAWS) (1988-91, 97-2000); and short story sketches by Agnes Jane Reeves Greer, businesswoman and wife of industrialist H.C. Greer.

West Virginia and Regional History Collection NEWSLETTER

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