

Fall 1990

WVRHC Newsletter, Fall/Winter 1990

West Virginia & Regional History Center

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West Virginia & Regional History Center, "WVRHC Newsletter, Fall/Winter 1990" (1990). *West Virginia & Regional History Center Newsletters*. 62.

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West Virginia and Regional History Collection

NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, No. 3

West Virginia University Library

Fall/Winter 1990

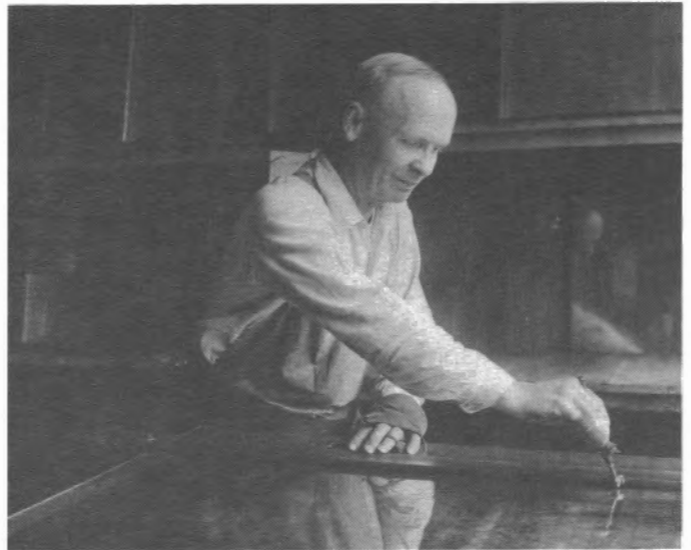
Window Glass Cutters League Records Now Open For Research

"So the history of the Window Glass Cutters is complete. . . . It eventually fell prey to the relentless march of progress in the form of sophisticated cutting machines and the revolutionary 'float process' (a production method which facilitated automated flat glass cutting). The proud, talented Cutter found out he too was mere mortal." With this lament, Albert Noe, Jr., shipped the records of the defunct Window Glass Cutters League of America (WGCLA) to the West Virginia and Regional History Collection in the fall of 1984. Encompassing more than 200 boxes, 30 volumes and 10 reels of microfilm, the nearly complete files of the WGCLA detail the union activities of one of America's most vibrant craft unions from its inception in 1876 to its dissolution nearly a century later. Happily, for those interested in the rise and decline of the window glass industry and its workers, this rich resource is now open to research.

It is fitting that the Regional History Collection is providing a home for the WGCLA's records, for the history of the window glass industry is inextricably linked to West Virginia. In the 1880s, the discovery of West Virginia's abundant sources of natural gas encouraged the migration of window glass firms from Ohio and Indiana to future centers of glass manufacture like Clarksburg, South Charleston, and Sistersville. By 1930, the state was the nation's second largest glass producer and the leader in window glass manufacture. In North Central West Virginia alone, more than fifteen towns had window glass factories.

The industry brought with it highly-skilled workers harboring a deep sense of craft pride. These craftsmen, many of whom had emigrated from Belgium, established strong unions in the tradition of European guilds to control conditions and membership in the trade. As late as 1905, the old Local Assembly 300 of the Knights of Labor still united all of the craftsmen in the industry—gatherers, blowers, flatteners, and cutters—under the slogan, "An Injury to One is the Concern of All." But by the 1920s, technological advancements had eliminated all of the crafts from the production process except cutting, and LA 300 had been supplanted by four different unions, each representing different factions of the window glass workers around the country.

In 1922, in response to this confusing and often contentious state of affairs, window glass cutters employed at the Libbey-



While technological advances eliminated the need for most glass industry craftsmen around the turn of the twentieth century, the window glass cutter's skill remained in demand until the 1970s.

Owens-Ford plant in South Charleston called on all their fellow craftsmen to re-establish a union for their craft alone. The following year, cutters from throughout the country held their first convention in Charleston and formed one of the most select and durable of all craft unions. The WGCLA soon won union-shop agreements with virtually all of the window glass firms in the country and exerted tight control over the trade. Indeed, to apply for an apprenticeship to the craft of window glass cutting one needed either a father, brother, or uncle already in the union.

Over the next decade, rival unions in the window glass industry slowly disbanded. The withdrawal of the cutters left the remaining workers with little power since technology had already eliminated the special skills that blowers, gatherers, and flatteners had brought to their work. The dream of one all-inclusive union in the window glass industry was more resilient however. When organized labor turned to recruiting less skilled workers following the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933, the dynamic president of the WGCLA, Glen McCabe, took charge of bringing all window glass workers into the union. Over the next year McCabe organized nearly 10,000 new members.

continued

West Virginia and Regional History Collection NEWSLETTER. A tri-annual publication of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at the West Virginia University Library, Colson Hall, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506. (304) 293-3536.

STAFF: David Bartlett, Annette Cotter, John Cuthbert, Kenneth Fones-Wolf, Harold Forbes, Duryea Kemp, Martha Neville, Larry Sypolt, Christelle Venham, Danny Williams

EDITOR: John Cuthbert

ISSN 1041-8695

By 1934, the elite cutters feared they would soon be overwhelmed within their own union. Consequently, in a mutual parting of the ways, McCabe took his new members and formed the Federation of Flat Glass Workers which soon affiliated with the CIO. Again, union rivalry reigned in the window glass industry. Although McCabe would return to the WGCLA in the 1940s (and became president again in the 1950s), forty years would pass before technological advancements would undermine the skilled cutters as it had the blowers, gatherers, and flatteners earlier.

In the post-World War II years, the WGCLA devoted much of its energy to trying to protect jobs in the declining window glass industry. Targeting cheap foreign imports as the principal reason for slumping production, the WGCLA cooperated with other glass-industry unions in pushing for high tariffs and import restrictions. West Virginia locals of the WGCLA were instrumental in forming the Glass Workers' Protective League which coordinated the lobbying efforts of the various unions. But as Noe lamented, the WGCLA finally succumbed to the onslaught of foreign competition and the revolutionary "float process" technology.

The WGCLA records held by the West Virginia Collection offer rich source material for many subjects of interest to industrial and labor historians. More than 30 boxes of collective bargaining records document industrial relations, wages, working conditions and production changes in the industry. Together with statistical reports from each of the locals, it is possible to chart seasonal changes in the industry, labor turnover, and unemployment for skilled window glass workers.

For those interested in social history, apprenticeship records dating back to the 1880s enable the study of labor re-

cruitment and training, while also making possible the reconstruction of the ethnic and familial character of the workforce. Individual membership cards dating from the early 1920s document geographic mobility and career patterns of the glass cutters. Other files suggest something of the riches of the craft-union culture to be found in the WGCLA's files. In the WGCLA attorney's files, for example, there are case records covering compensation for silicosis, the complaints of Jehovah's Witnesses who were fired for failing to salute the flag during World War II, and the expulsion of a Belgian glass cutter for working in a non-union shop in Belgium when he returned to bring his family to Charleston.

For more institutionally-inclined historians, detailed minutes of conventions, executive board minutes, and files of the president's and the secretary-treasurer's correspondence are particularly revealing for the study of national union administration. Similarly, the collective bargaining files and the president's files paint a vivid portrait of the difficulty that an exclusive craft union faced when dealing with the provisions of equal employment opportunity laws.



This flamboyant cutter no doubt agreed with the adages "look good, feel good" and "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."



Boys of the Monongah Glass Works, Monongah, WV, ca. 1910. Photo from the National Archives.

Not to be overlooked are the files of the WGCLA's predecessor organizations which some of the League's officers acquired over the years. Included are 10 boxes and 17 volumes of documents, clippings, and records from Knights of Labor Local Assembly 300, the Window Glass Cutters and Flatteners Association of America, and the National Window Glass Workers of America, among other early unions, which document the history and the proud, almost guild-like character of window-glass worker unionism. While it is true that the Glass Cutters may have fallen "prey to the relentless march of progress," their traditions, their culture, and their craft are now a part of history, available for what they might offer to the labor movement of today.

AMERICAN MEMORY Brings Library of Congress Holdings to Colson Hall

In 1901, the Library of Congress embarked upon a program to disseminate its finding aids which was to revolutionize librarianship in America during the twentieth century. The effort was begun through the sale and distribution of printed copies of the Library's catalog cards. In the ensuing decades, these cards became the basis for catalogs in libraries throughout the nation. As the century progressed, through national union catalogs and electronic databases, the Library's diverse finding aids became available to researchers throughout the world.

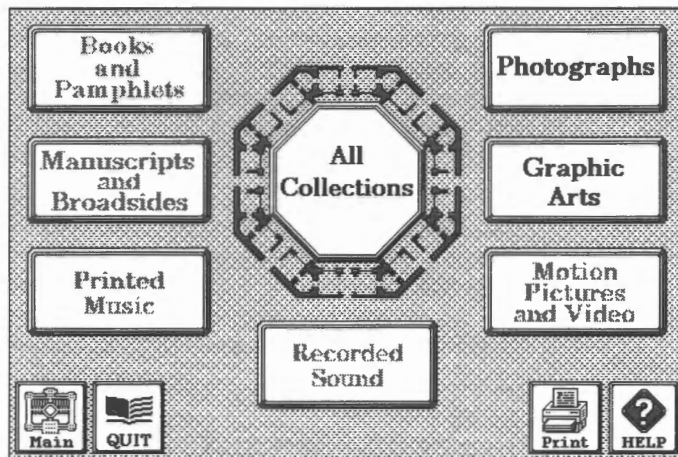
Today, as a new century approaches, the Library of Congress is laying the groundwork for yet another revolutionary innovation: the dissemination of not just finding aids, but the Library's holdings themselves! The Regional History Collection is participating in this effort by serving as a test site for the program's pilot project, *American Memory*.



The *American Memory* work station is installed in the Collection's Robert C. Byrd Reading Room.

The American Memory Project: Sharing Unique Collections Electronically is actually a response to Librarian of Congress James H. Billington's inaugural remark in 1987 that the Library must find new ways to disseminate its holdings to those who are unable to visit Washington, D.C., to use them in person. Project staff intend to do just that by making Library of Congress collections available to libraries across America on compact and laser disk.

The first cluster of collections being readied for distribution was carefully chosen to represent the diversity of the Library's information formats. Based on the theme of "America at the Start of a New Century," the following collections will be released during the project's first phase: a collection of about 25,000 postcard views of America from the Detroit Publishing Company and William Henry Jackson; the Daniel A.P. Murray pamphlet collection of writings by nineteenth and early twentieth century African-American writers; segments of the papers and manuscripts of composer Edward McDowell; life histories from the Folklore Project of the WPA Federal Writers' Project; selected early motion picture footage of American cities and people; ethnic folk music recordings from Northern California; the correspondence



The "Reading Room" screen enables users to choose the specific collection media with which they would like to work.

from the Sen. Robert M. La Follette, Sr. Family; and early spoken word commercial sound recordings including the voices of turn-of-the-century political figures, stage performers and orators.

Currently, about 30,000 visual images have been entered into the system and are accessible at a handful of test workstations around the country, including the one in Colson Hall. Each station consists of a Macintosh microcomputer and color monitor which maintains and displays the system database, a laser disk player and a second monitor which displays the actual documents, and a laser printer which produces printed copies of the documents.

Users accessing the system's main menu are prompted to select one of four options: an "orientation center" which explains how the system operates; a "reading room," which enables the user to perform boolean searches of the catalog; an "exhibit hall" which contains interpretive exhibits drawn from American Memory collections; and a "workshop" which enables users to prepare their own exhibits and programs.

continued



When a user has identified a section of text or a visual item of interest, a "digitized" rendition of the item can be printed on the system's laser printer. This photo shows loggers dissecting a giant poplar on the Williams River about 1900.

The purpose of the pilot project is to elicit feedback from users at WVU and elsewhere that will be used in refining the electronic dissemination of library resources. In fact, the system includes a special screen upon which users may record their comments regarding the program's strengths and weaknesses.

Anyone with an interest in promoting the development of this revolutionary program should make it a point to visit the *American Memory* test site in Colson Hall. Library users rarely have such an opportunity to provide input on how they will want to access library information in the future!

Regional History Association News

West Virginia Day 1991 To Focus Upon Early Settlement Era

Did you know that buffalo once roamed the West Virginia hills in abundance? That Daniel Boone lived in the Kanawha Valley? That according to some historians, the American Revolution began right here in the Mountain State? These are but a few of the facts and issues that will be explored during the 1991 West Virginia Day Celebration. The Celebration will focus upon natives, explorers and pioneers in West Virginia history.

While the day's agenda is still on the drawing board, plans are being laid to make this year's Celebration the most ambitious one to date. In addition to the traditional forum, exhibit and birthday picnic, special attractions of 1991 will include an evening street fair and concert in downtown Morgantown which may hold a few surprises!

As always, we hope that the Regional History Association will be well represented. Members are urged to start planning now to be in Morgantown on June 20th.

New Members, West Virginia and Regional History Association

Donor

Robert M. Bastress, Jr., *Morgantown, WV*
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Nicholas D. Linger III, *Lost Creek, WV*
Dr. Sally W. Maggard, *Morgantown, WV*
Mrs. Victorine Louistall Monroe, *Clarksburg, WV*
The Ohio Historical Society, *Columbus, OH*
Thomas F. Rahrig, *Cumberland, MD*
Clarke Ridgway, *Morgantown, WV*
Jimmy D.L. Roan, *Adena, OH*
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James Townsend, *Huntington Beach, CA*
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Linda K. Wade, *New Martinsville, WV*
James E. Weaver, *Morgantown, WV*
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SELECTED ACCESSIONS LIST

Barns Family. Papers and lithograph, 1884-1990. 3 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 3066.

A framed lithograph of the James Barns residence in Cumberland Township, near Carmichaels, Pennsylvania, with an insert containing a drawing of the first successfully operating engine in Greene County (ca.1833), located in the Barns Woolen Factory on Muddy Creek. Included is a history of the Barns family of north central West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania. Mention is made of abolitionists, agricultural trends, James Barns, William Shinn Barns, George Brown, Madison College, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, Asa Shinn, Uniontown, Pennsylvania, Waitman T. Willey, and the woolen industry.

Beto, Richard. Papers and photographs, 1861-65. 1 in. Gift/Loan for photoduplication, 1990. A&M 3044, Addendum.

A collection of documents and photographs concerning West Virginians in the Civil War. Included is the 1864 diary of Alex McGraw of the West Virginia 1st Light Artillery, Battery D, which details camp life, rumors, troop movements and skirmishes with Confederates in the Eastern Panhandle during the Civil War; an early depot quartermaster order for the Confederate States Army issued by Alfred W. G. Davis stationed in Fayette County; photographs and copies of Adjutant General reports, pension records, commission reports and unit histories concerning Charles C. Eyster of the West Virginia 6th Infantry and Elias Powell of the West Virginia 7th Cavalry; a biography of John Henry Burton, Confederate Superintendent of Armories and small arms manufacturing specialist, entrepreneur and gentleman farmer; and photos and biographical information of Gen. Thomas M. Harris and C. J. Faulkner. There is much mention of the Civil War battle fought in West Virginia, Droop Mountain, where the West Virginia 7th Cavalry was among attacking Federal units.

Elkins, Davis. Letterbook, 1911. 1 volume. Gift, 1990. A&M 3063.

A letterbook documenting the daily correspondence of Davis Elkins in 1911, the period in which he served in the U. S. Senate to fill the vacancy created by the death of his father, Stephen Benton Elkins. The letterbook contains mostly constituent requests for information about various laws and regulations, or lobbying requests on pending legislation. There are many condolences and a few personal business letters.

Hannum, Alberta Pierson. Papers, 1928-59. 3 in. Transfer, 1990. A&M 2236, Addendum.

Manuscripts of published books written by Alberta Pierson Hannum. Hannum, a longtime resident of Wheeling, was the wife of Robert F. Hannum, president of the Fostoria Glass Company. As a writer, she was noted for her fiction and non-fiction about the Southern Appalachian region. Manuscript titles include: "Thursday April," "Roseanna McCoy," "Paint the Wind," and "Look Back with Love."

Harvey and DeQuaise Grocery. Ledgers, 1887-1901. 4 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 3082.

Two customer credit ledgers of the Harvey and DeQuaise Grocery of Deepwater, Fayette County. Harvey and DeQuaise were related by marriage, and both were originally from Fayetteville. They built a permanent structure for their store in 1892 at Deepwater, a rail head of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, twenty miles from Fayetteville, in what was then a productive coal mining field. The entries reflect that the establishment was also a general store carrying items such as nails, seed, and clothing, as well as food items.

Lazzell, Blanche. Correspondence and miscellaneous items, 1899-1983. 6 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 2008, Addendum.

Letters, genealogy, miscellaneous literature and mementos of Blanche Lazzell, including a diploma from the South Carolina Co-Educational Institute, and genealogies of the following families: Carhart, Lazzell, McVicker, and Pope.



Blanche Lazzell waters the petunias which she cultivated about her Provincetown, Massachusetts, studio, 1933.

Lazzell, Blanche. Correspondence, 1913-56. 6 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 2008, Addendum.

Correspondence between Monongalia County native Blanche Lazzell and her niece, Martha Frances Reed (Mrs. Robert E. Sellers). The letters concern family matters, Lazzell's life and work as an artist in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and her travels to New York City and St. Augustine, Florida. Of interest are her views on the changing character of Provincetown from an art haven to a resort town, her interest and belief in theology, and her own feelings about what she has achieved. Lazzell mentions her art career, and in particular studying under and working with the abstractionists Fernand Leger and Hans Hofmann. Included are sketches, textiles and jewelry made by Blanche Lazzell.

Morgantown Post Office Scrapbook. 1 vol, ca.1900-73. 2 in. Loan for photoduplication, 1990. A&M 3080.

A scrapbook kept by the local postmaster which documents in photographs, pamphlets, newsclippings, and papers, the growth, change and history of the Morgantown post office. The histories indicate it was one of the first post offices in what is now West Virginia; George Washington appointed its first postmaster in 1795. Many clippings deal with postmaster appointments and changes in postal employee conditions, such as pay raises and working hours. Pictures and articles document the construction of the previous post office, now the Monongalia Arts Center, as well as the present post office building. Also included is a set of newspaper clippings about natives of Morgantown who served in the military during World War II.

Mosley, Woodrow. Papers, 1988. 1 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 3055.

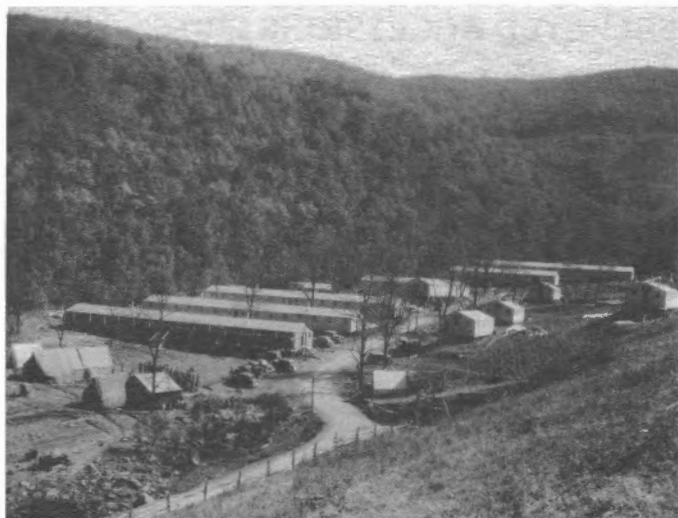
A transcript of an interview with a retired coal miner from Lincoln County, West Virginia. Mosley lived and worked in the coal fields of Logan County, West Virginia, and Pike County, Kentucky, most of his life. He started to work in 1929 when mining was still done by pick and shovel, and retired in the early sixties when mining had become mechanized. He describes the changes in mining technology he experienced and the effect of unionization in the coal mining region of southern West Virginia.

Ohio 34th Infantry—Descriptive Book. 1 vol., 1861-65. 2 in. Acquired, 1990. A&M 3061.

An official register with military career descriptions of the soldiers of a Civil War regiment stationed in southern West Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The entries vary for commissioned officers and enlisted men. For officers, entries include name, rank, appointment date, and a career summary. Information on enlisted men includes name, age, height, complexion, eye and hair color, occupation, place of birth (including town or county and state), and enlistment particulars (when, where, and by whom). Also included are summaries of service, covering such categories as discharge, promotion, re-enlistment, desertion, missing, disability, imprisonment, or death. Also there is a statement of the regiment's original organization in Clermont County, Ohio, and first assignment to West Virginia.

Owens, Ivan C. Scrapbook, 1935-45. 1 vol. 4 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 2788.

A scrapbook of the Civilian Conservation Corps—Soil Conservation Service kept by Ivan C. Owens, an agriculture extension agent and soil erosion expert who became a soil conservation officer in charge of control projects. He headed area, district, and state conservation offices for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in West Virginia. The scrapbook contains clippings about the voluntary establishment by election of soil conservation districts formed by in-state farmers. Also included are clippings about the Civilian Conservation Corps and their camps located in the state, and about the soil erosion abatement and reforestation projects of the CCC in West Virginia.



Part of Roosevelt's New Deal, the Civilian Conservation Corps put young men to work revitalizing and developing the nation's natural resources. In West Virginia, the Corps made important contributions in the areas of forest management and soil conservation and also set up the state park system. In the process, the Corps employed more than 55,000 West Virginians.



Pictured above are CCC Camp Hutton (top), Randolph County, ca. 1937, and a CCC encampment at Shavers Fork (bottom), Randolph County, ca. 1938.

Telluric Company. 1 vol. 1891-1954. 1 in. Acquired, 1990. A&M 3064.

A record book of a Morgantown-based investment company that acquired and leased land in the oil and gas fields of north central West Virginia. The contents of the record book are chiefly stockholder meeting reports about audits, leases, royalties and agreements. Prominent company members named in the volume are Charles S. White, I. C. White, R. T. Cunningham, A. F. Ramsay, William S. Stevenson, T. M. Jackson, Clarence B. Dille and J. Lewis Williams. Although not the company president, I. C. White, an eminent geologist, was instrumental in its creation and operation. White, a renowned specialist in oil, gas, and coal geology, initiated the anticlinal theory of oil and gas deposits and on its basis speculated correctly that there were ample deposits in the Mannington region. The company attained land holdings and leases in an oil and gas producing region encompassing Monongalia, Wetzel, Marion, Harrison, Doddridge and Lewis counties. The minutes also mention associated companies such as the Eureka Pipe Line Co., South Penn Oil Co., and the Fisher Oil Co.

Union Volunteers of West Virginia Regiments. Microfilm, 1861–65. 261 reels. Acquired, 1990. A&M 3059.

The National Archives microfilm edition of the compiled service records of soldiers belonging to units from the State of West Virginia. The records are arranged according to an organizational breakdown ending with the regiment or the independent company. Under each unit the service records are arranged alphabetically by soldiers' surnames.

Preceding the jacket-envelopes for the individual soldiers in each organizational unit are envelopes containing record-of-events cards giving the stations of the unit and sometimes information relating to the movements, activities, or organization of the unit or a part of it. In addition, there sometimes are envelopes containing general notation cards giving information relating to the entire organizational unit.

The jacket-envelope for each soldier is labeled with his name, rank, and unit in which he served and typically contains the originals of any papers relating solely to that soldier and card abstracts of entries relating to the soldier as found in original muster rolls, returns, descriptive books, etc. There are cross-references for soldiers' names that appear in the records under more than one spelling.

The series of card abstracts is arranged in the same general organizational order as the jacket-envelopes. The personal papers are in two subseries: one arranged alphabetically by name of soldier, the other by organizational unit and thereunder alphabetically by name of soldier.

United States 1st–6th Volunteer Infantry (Ex-Confederates). Microfilm, 1864–66. 65 reels. Acquired, 1990. A&M 3057.

National Archives microfilm of the compiled service records of Confederate prisoners of war who were released from prison camps upon signing a loyalty oath and volunteering for service in the Union Army. The ex-Confederates who comprised the First through Sixth United States Volunteer Infantry Regiments were recruited at first from the prison camp at Pt. Lookout, Maryland, but later also from Rock Island, Alton, Camp Douglas, and Camp Morton in Illinois, and at Camp Chase in Columbus, Ohio. Although initially serving near combat theaters of the Civil War, it was deemed that these popularly nicknamed "Galvanized Yankees" should not have to face fighting their former comrades in arms. Consequently, they were transferred early on to the northwestern frontier where they served as escorts and guards for settlers from the native inhabitants (Plains Indians).

The records are arranged consecutively by regiment number and thereunder alphabetically by soldier's surname. The records contained therein relate solely to a particular soldier and are of two general types. The first kind consists of card index abstracts of entries on rolls or in books such as muster rolls, hospital rolls, or descriptive books. The second type consists of copies of original personal papers such as medical reports, enlistment papers and orders. Reel 65 consists of personal papers of soldiers with insufficient proof of service to justify a regular compiled record, those rejected for service for various reasons, and those attached to one of the regiments such as physicians or chaplains.

West Virginia Internal Revenue Lists. Microfilm, 1862–66. 4 reels. Acquired, 1990. A&M 3058.

The tax assessment lists for the two collection districts established in West Virginia during the Civil War. The lists record annual, monthly, and special taxes and duties levied on income, property, trade and manufactured items. The lists are of two types corresponding to the contemporary categories of corporate and personal income taxes. The lists are somewhat incomplete because of a lack of standardization in regulations and enforcement measures. Soon after the Civil War many of the provisions of the original act of 1862 were rescinded by Congress. The act was officially terminated in 1873 when the offices of assessors and their district assistants were abolished.

West Virginia Music Education Association. Papers, 1967–89. 7 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 1599, Addendum.

Minutes and conference programs of the West Virginia Music Education Association and its affiliate, the College Music Educators. Included are the papers of Association presidents Harry Faulk and Charles Martyn.

West Virginia Post Office Site Location Reports. Microfilm, 1837–1950. 21 reels. Acquired, 1990. A&M 3058.

National Archives microfilm of the record of forms, and in most cases map sketches, on which local postmasters supplied data to the Topographer of the United States Post Office Department for use in determining post office site locations relative to nearby post offices, transportation routes and facilities. The records are arranged in roughly alphabetical order by site location at the county level. In instances of more than one report for a particular site, generally a backward chronological order is followed from the most recent report to that of the earliest. With few exceptions the reports do not show exact site locations, nor do they include building survey information of the post offices. The reports were used by the Topographer to prepare postal maps for use by the department and for sale to the public. In themselves, the reports constituted an important part of the procedure for establishing new post offices.



Jacob Zumbach General Merchandise and Post Office, Helvetia, Randolph County, ca. 1890.

West Virginia Postmasters. 1832-1971. Microfilm, 4 reels. A&M 3026, Addendum.

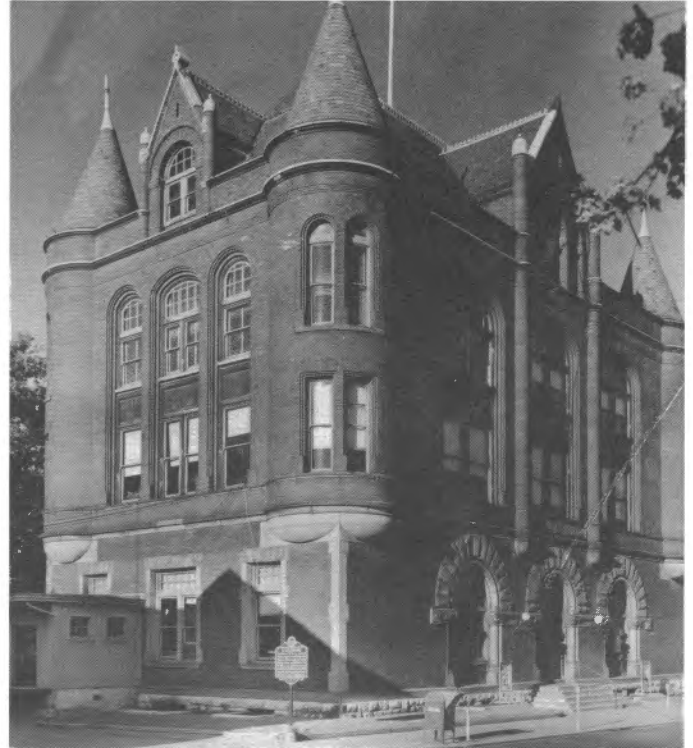
The record of the appointment of postmasters in the West Virginia counties, alphabetically from Barbour to Wyoming.



United States Post Office, Moorefield, ca. 1920.

Williams, Isaac and Josiah. Volumes and papers, 1844-1990. 3 in. Gift, 1990. A&M 3065.

An account book, payroll ledgers, bills and invoices of Isaac and Josiah Williams, Uniontown, Pennsylvania, brick manufacturers. Included is a separate account, written by the donor about the Williams family and their importance in the local history of Uniontown, Pennsylvania.



United States Post Office, Martinsburg, ca. 1950.

West Virginia and Regional History Collection Newsletter
Colson Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506

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Pressing Department of the Fostoria Glass Company, ca. 1920. See page 1.