



# WEST VIRGINIA Archives and History NEWS

*From the Editor:*

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**Archives and History News  
is available on the  
Archives and History Web site  
[http://www.wvculture.org/history/  
ahnews/ahnews.html](http://www.wvculture.org/history/ahnews/ahnews.html)**

*What are you doing with the records of your life?* In the digital age, that question is perhaps more important than it has been at any time in the past. Throughout written history, valuable records have been lost due to fire, flood, and neglect, and people often have not recognized the potential informational value of old papers when cleaning out a family home. Often, only photographs are kept, although they, too, may find their way to the dump. Today, however, when so much of our lives exists only in electronic form, historical records are perhaps even more vulnerable. Even as technology has the ability to recover documents supposedly deleted forever, materials are lost every day. Are all those digital photographs on your computer or smartphone backed up elsewhere? What about other important electronic files? Even if some large entity captures and stores your e-mails, Facebook pages, etc., *somewhere*, will your descendants be able to tap into them after you are gone to find out who you were?

## Hatfield-McCoy Feudist Letters Come to State Archives

*By Randolph Marcum Jr. and  
Mary Johnson*

West Virginia Archives and History recently received ten letters authored by Alexander Messer, participant in the Hatfield-McCoy Feud. The letters came to the State Archives from Charles Allen Reed, a great-grandson of Messer.

Alexander Messer was born August 13, 1837, in Hazard, Perry County, Kentucky, and died on June 24, 1923, at the Western State Hospital in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. He served in the Union Army in the 4th Kentucky Mounted Infantry, Company C, enlisting at the beginning of the Civil War. Messer participated in several actions in Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia, including the pursuit of Gen. John B. Hood's army. He also was in action against Nathan

Bedford Forrest's army in the latter part of the war. Messer received a pension for his service, which he later requested be increased because of his infirmity and old age. It was because of his pension that Messer

was able to finance his later legal expenses and help his family.

The ten letters were sent by Messer to his daughter, Haney Prater, between 1901 and 1906

*Continued on the next page*

## West Virginia Glass to be Focus of September 4 Library Program

On September 4, 2012, Dean Six will present "Glass from the Mountain State: A Very Broad View of 200 Years" at the Tuesday evening lecture in the Archives and History Library in the Culture Center in Charleston. The program will begin at 6:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

Six will address the number and location of glass factories and types of glass produced in West Virginia since 1813. Specific factories across

time and a diversity of products will be discussed, and there will be physical samples on hand to view. Six plans to discuss the numerous towns and communities where glass was made, and he also will explore questions such as why West Virginia was a glass leader for decades and what the possible reasons were for the demise of the glass industry.

Dean Six is a native of Cairo,

*Continued on the next page*

*"Messer" continued from page 1*

while he was in prison in Eddysville, Kentucky. The letters are primarily of a personal nature and express his love for his daughter and grandchildren; however, there is some information regarding his case and its progression toward his eventual parole. In a March 16, 1902, letter, for example, Messer states his adherence to his principles, possibly a reference to an attempt to persuade him to confess or express regret. In a couple of other letters, Messer specifically makes reference to his efforts to obtain parole.

He is best known as a Hatfield supporter during the Hatfield-McCoy Feud and participated in the execution of the three McCoy boys in August 1882, allegedly as the shooter of the youngest, Randolph McCoy Jr. Messer was tried in Pike County, Kentucky, and sentenced to life in prison but was paroled in 1906. He violated the terms of his parole after a few months of freedom and was sent back to prison, eventually being sent to the prison hospital in Hopkinsville where he died at the age of 85. Although Alexander Messer was the author of these letters, they were dictated to various other individuals who actually wrote them on paper. This explains the various spellings of his daughter's name, as well as the different handwriting.

The letters have been digitized and are available, along with transcriptions, on the Archives and History Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/collections/ms2012-011.html>.

*"Glass" continued from page 1*

West Virginia. He holds multiple degrees from WVU and is employed as a "glass expert" for Replacements, Ltd., in Greensboro, North Carolina. He also serves as the executive director of the Museum of American Glass in West Virginia, a position he has held since 1996. Six has curated more than a dozen museum exhibits, and he has appeared in several video and television documentaries on glass. He also has been a keynote speaker at numerous national glass conventions, among them shows of Akro-Agate, Early American Pattern Glass, Fenton, Paden City, Morgantown, Tiffin, Vaseline, and Portland Rain of Glass.

Six has written more than 200 articles that have appeared in national and international periodicals including *Goldenseal Magazine* as well as numerous monographs. He

is the author of four major books on West Virginia glass and the co-author of nine others on glass or china. His most recent book, published by Quarrier Press in 2012, is *West Virginia Glass Towns*.

On September 4, the library will close at 5 p.m. and reopen at 5:45 p.m. for participants only. For planning purposes, participants are encouraged to register for the lecture, but advance registration is not required to attend. To register in advance, contact Robert Taylor, library manager, by e-mail at [bobby.l.taylor@wv.gov](mailto:bobby.l.taylor@wv.gov) or at (304) 558-0230, ext. 163. Participants interested in registering by e-mail should send their name, telephone number and the name and date of the session. For additional information, contact the Archives and History Library at (304) 558-0230.

*[This article originally was prepared by Mary Johnson for the Archives and History Web site based on information provided by Dean Six.]*

### Evening Workshops and Lecture Schedule

Date	Conducted by:	Subject
October 2 Tuesday	Stan Bumgardner	<i>Postcards of West Virginia</i>
November 13 Tuesday	Dr. Kenneth R. Bailey	<i>"Scratch 'em and Sue 'em"</i>
January 8, 2013 Tuesday	Dr. Fred Barkey	<i>Working Class Radicals: The Socialist Party in West Virginia, 1898-1920</i>

*Registration for these free workshops is helpful but not required.*  
 Call our office at (304) 558-0230, or e-mail [bobby.l.taylor@wv.gov](mailto:bobby.l.taylor@wv.gov).

Workshops are held 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the West Virginia Archives and History Library, The Culture Center, Charleston, West Virginia.

### Check out Archives and History's YouTube and Facebook Pages

<http://www.youtube.com/user/wvarchivesandhistory>  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/West-Virginia-Archives-and-History/168933289812323>

### Mark Your Calendars!

**Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Revisited,  
 Archives and History Library,  
 Saturday, September 22  
 1:00 p.m.**

## West Virginia Cookbooks to be Discussed at September 13 Program

On September 13, 2012, Susan Scouras will present "West Virginia Cookbooks" at the Thursday evening lecture in the Archives and History Library in the Culture Center in Charleston. The program will begin at 6:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

Scouras will discuss cookbooks as historical resources, food availability and recipes during periods of rationing such as World War II, and newspapers as a source for food, cooking, and recipe information for the time period covered by Archives and History's newspaper collection (from the mid 19th century to the present). The program will feature cookbooks from Archives and History's collection. Cookbooks in the collection include those compiled and distributed by commercial publishers, church and civic groups, fundraisers, appliance and food manufacturers, and individuals.

Scouras is interested in American history, libraries, and family history and enjoys discovering what any object or printed material from the past can reveal about its time period. She holds a bachelor's degree in

history and a master's degree in library science (MSLS), both from the University of Kentucky. Scouras has worked as librarian at West Virginia Archives and History for 13 years.

Advance registration for the program is not required but is

*[This article originally was prepared by Mary Johnson for the Archives and History Web site based on information provided by Susan Scouras.]*



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*History News*, [Volume and issue numbers], [Month, Year], a publication of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

## August Library Programs are Informative

By Mary Johnson

On August 7, 2012, Jeff Pierson, director of the Arts Section of the Division of Culture and History, gave a presentation on artists from West Virginia. Pierson's jam-packed presentation included artists as diverse as 19th-century western landscape painter William Robinson Leigh, actor Brad Dourif, country music singer Kathy Mattea, artist-blacksmith Jeff Fetty, and

HGTV personality and interior designer Kristan Cunningham.

On August 9, our own director, Joe Geiger, discussed Archives and History's online resources. Before accepting his current position as director, Geiger was in charge of Archives and History's Web site, and he keeps his hand in by periodically adding materials to the site. Several of even the most experienced users of our Web site



commented that they had learned about something that they didn't know.

Photos of the two presentations are available on the Archives and History Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/workshops/wkshp080712.html> (Pierson) and <http://www.wvculture.org/history/workshops/2012augustgenclub.html> (Geiger). Clips of the programs will be added to our Web site soon and full-length versions will be available on Archives and History's YouTube page in the near future for those who were unable to attend the programs in person.



## Calendar of Events

Please check our Web site (<http://www.wvculture.org/history>) for genealogical and historical society meeting announcements, and for more complete information on activities listed below.

**“NOT ALWAYS STANDING STILL & SMILING: UPSHUR COUNTY HISTORY, ITS PEOPLE AND EVENTS AS DEPICTED BY PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS, AND WRITERS,”** SUMMER 2012 EXHIBIT, Sundays through September 30: History Center Museum, Buckhannon. For more information, see <http://www.upshurcountyhistoricalsociety.com>.

**“THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY: WEST VIRGINIA’S GIFT TO THE WORLD,”** EXHIBIT, through January 13, 2013: Culture Center, Charleston.

**LABOR DAY, September 3:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**“MYTHS, ELUSIVE ‘TRUE FACTS’ AND SURPRISING TIDBITS OF SHEPHERDSTOWN HISTORY,”** September 5: Dr. Jerry Bruce Thomas, speaker, Shepherdstown.

**“WEST VIRGINIA FORTS AND FRONTIER ARCHAEOLOGY,”** September 16: Drs. Stephen and Kim McBride, speakers, Pricketts Fort.

**MARTIN R. DELANY 200TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT, September 17:** Forum discussion of Delany’s life during and after the Civil War, Star Lodge #1, Charles Town.

**“HOLLIDAY’S COVE IN THE YEAR 1912,”** September 18: Weirton Area Museum and Cultural Center, Weirton.

**“LIKE AN AWFUL DREAM: SHEPHERDSTOWN AT WAR, 1861-1865,”** September 20: Nicholas Redding, speaker, Shepherdstown.

**“PAINT CREEK-CABIN CREEK REVISITED,”** September 22: Dr. Ken Bailey, Dr. Fred Barkey, and Paul Nyden, presenters, Archives and History Library, Culture Center, Charleston. For more information, contact Bryan Ward at (304) 558-0230 or [bryan.e.ward@wv.gov](mailto:bryan.e.ward@wv.gov).

**ROANE COUNTY GENEALOGY FAIR, September 22:** Spencer.

**DAVID HUNTER STROTHER PORTRAYAL, September 22:** Don Teter, presenter, West Virginia Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**“RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN MARSHALL COUNTY, WV,”** September 27: Jamie S. Meece, Stevan C. Pullins, and C. Michael Anslinger, speakers, Grave Creek Mound, Moundsville.

**“SHARING STORIES, LEARNING LESSONS: TRUTH & TRIUMPH IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION,”** September 27–29: Preservation Alliance of West Virginia Conference, Jefferson County.

**COLUMBUS DAY, October 8:** Archives Library will be open.\*

**REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST: A FESTIVAL OF WOOD COUNTY’S HISTORY AND HERITAGE, October 11–14:** Parkersburg and Wood County.

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**PANHANDLE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE PRESERVATION WORKSHOP,**  
October 12–13: American Public University System Academics Center Library, Charles Town. For more information, contact Brad Wiles, [bwiles@apus.edu](mailto:bwiles@apus.edu) or (304) 724-2670.

**THOMAS “STONEWALL” JACKSON PORTRAYAL, October 13:** Doug Riley, presenter,  
West Virginia Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**WEST VIRGINIA BOOK FESTIVAL, October 13–14:** Charleston.

**“THE SHEPHERDSTOWN TRAIN STATION: AN ORAL HISTORY,”**  
October 25: Dr. Kevin Williams, speaker, Shepherdstown.

**HUMANITIES COUNCIL MCCREIGHT LECTURE IN THE HUMANITIES,**  
October 25: Edmund Morris, speaker, on Theodore Roosevelt, The Culture Center, Charleston.

**“SCRATCH ‘EM AND SUE ‘EM: POST CIVIL WAR LEGAL ISSUES,”** October 27:  
Dr. Kenneth Bailey, speaker, West Virginia Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**GENERAL ELECTION DAY, November 6:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**VETERANS DAY, November 12:** Archives Library will be open.\*

**MARTIN R. DELANY 200TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT, November 19:**  
Film on Delany’s life, Fishermen Hall, Charles Town.

**THANKSGIVING DAY, November 22:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**THANKSGIVING FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, November 23–24:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**“SHEPHERDSTOWN’S HISTORY IN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT,”**  
November 29: Dr. John Stealey III, speaker, Shepherdstown. [tentative title]

**VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS HOME TOUR AND TEA, December 1–2:**  
Julia-Ann Square Historic District, Parkersburg.

**“HOLIDAYS AT THE HALL,”** December 15: West Virginia Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24:** Archives Library will be open *half day only*.

**CHRISTMAS DAY, December 25:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**NEW YEAR’S EVE, December 31:** Archives Library will be open *half day only*.

**NEW YEAR’S DAY, January 1, 2013:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

*\*Only the Archives Library will be staffed—all other Archives offices will be closed.*

The West Virginia Library Commission Library in the Culture Center is closed weekends and all holidays.

WEST VIRGINIA  
**Archives**  
 and **History NEWS**

West Virginia Division of Culture and History  
 The Culture Center  
 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East  
 Charleston, WV 25305-0300

**WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.**

Let us know what you find helpful in the newsletter, and what new topics you would like covered. Contact *West Virginia Archives and History News* Editor Susan Scouras, (304) 558-0230, Ext. 742, or by e-mail: [susan.c.scouras@wv.gov](mailto:susan.c.scouras@wv.gov).

[www.wvculture.org/history](http://www.wvculture.org/history)

**Archives and History Staff**

Joe Geiger ..... Director  
 Bryan Ward..... Assistant Director  
 Debra Basham .....Archivist (photographs, special collections)  
 Constance Baston ..... Researcher (Veterans Memorial Archives)  
 Kyle Campbell .....Cultural Program Specialist (county records preservation project)  
 Greg Carroll..... Historian (Civil War, Native American history)  
 Dick Fauss .....Archivist (microfilm and moving images collection)  
 Denise Ferguson..... County Records Archivist  
 Allen Fowler ..... Special projects  
 Elaine Gates ..... Library Assistant (microfilming and microfilm repairs)  
 Ed Hicks..... Photo Archivist (archival photography, darkroom)  
 Susan Holbrook ..... Secretary  
 Mary Johnson.....Historian  
 Terry Lowry ..... Historian (Veterans records)  
 Randy Marcum ..... Cultural Program Associate (county records preservation project)  
 Cathy Miller .....Library Assistant (WV State documents)  
 Harold Newman .....Library Assistant (microfilming, Revolutionary War)  
 Susan Scouras..... Librarian (cataloging, Kentucky, library collection, newsletter editor)  
 Jaime Simmons..... Library Assistant (records of the 1700's and early 1800's, Pennsylvania)  
 Bobby Taylor ..... Library Manager  
 Part time/Governor's Interns..... James Balch  
 Volunteers..... Carolyn Conner, Bill Kelley, James Wilburn, Rachel Ward,  
 and Patricia Richards McClure