

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1 · SPRING 2024

THE ARCHIVES

Official Newsletter of the West Virginia State Archives

Welcome to the new West Virginia Archives and History newsletter!

From 2000 to 2015, Archives and History News was edited by Susan Scouras and brought information about the Archives to the public. Upcoming events, helpful research tips, and information about new collections all graced its pages.

Our hope is for The Archives to provide a similar service and allow the public more knowledge of our role. We have a wealth of documents, videos, and photographs for all different types of researchers. We welcome all sorts of researchers. Whether you are a studious academic working on a thesis, an amateur genealogist looking to shed some light on your family lore, or just a lover of history, the Archives has something for you. You don't have to make an appointment, or pay a fee to research in person. We have a library full of reference books (some you can only find here!) Our closed stacks collections can be viewed by the public on request, see listings online. We have everything from mine disaster books to county court documents. Our microfilm collection is organized by county and contains things such as births, deaths, and naturalizations.

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Butterflies in the Coalfields

BY MEREDITH BARBERY

From 1856 to 1897, William Henry Edwards led the double life of Coal Baron and Naturalist. For forty-two years, Edwards raised butterflies at his home in Paint Creek and studied them. Nearly thirty years of his life, and a large amount of his fortune, were dedicated to publishing [The Butterflies of North America](#), and paying multiple artists to create beautiful lithographic prints. The vast majority of these were drawn by Mary Peart, then colorized and printed by Lydia Bowen.

Mary Peart was an artist living in Philadelphia. She was dedicated to the mission of depicting the subjects in as much detail as possible and took up raising butterflies to better portray them at all stages. Using microscopes and any other tools at her disposal, she strove to get even the finest of details for her illustrations.

Lydia Bowen took over her husband's lithography business in Philadelphia after his death in 1856 and was chosen as the printer for most of the prints for [The Butterflies of North America](#). Her incredible eye for color can be seen on nearly every print in the series.

Edwards, Peart, and Bowen worked together with various other contributors around the country to procure, study, and then bring butterflies to life on the pages of a book which still remains a standard to this day.

Please enjoy our collection of the beautiful lithographs by Mary Peart and others, research journals of Edwards, volumes of [The Butterflies of North America](#) printed by Bowen and Company, and take a peek in the scrapbooks with drawing proofs. Items will be on display in the Archives Reading Room until June 19, 2024.



Colias Lithograph proof by Mary Peart



William Henry Edwards, date unknown



Civil War Medals

BY RANDY MARCUM

Since 1984, the list of available West Virginia Civil War medals has steadily shrunk; from approximately 5,200 to 3,900. That is a far cry from the original amount of 26,099 minted in New York City by Abraham Demarest after being approved by the West Virginia legislature in 1866.

Originally the responsibility of the Adjutant General’s Office, approximately fifteen thousand medals were given out during the first year and an additional twenty-five hundred in 1868. In this campaign, newspaper advertisements were used to request soldiers’ addresses and some medals were transferred to regimental or company commanders for distribution. The remaining medals were very slowly distributed because of the state’s inability to reach veterans and their heirs.

Virgil A. Lewis, the first State Historian and Archivist, wrote to Governor William M. O. Dawson to solicit his support in having the medals transferred to the Department of Archives and History for distribution, stating that about seven thousand remained in 1870 and this number had been reduced by only two to three thousand in the intervening thirty-nine years.

Today, the Department of Arts, Culture and History, through Archives and History, is attempting to complete the task begun in 1866 by awarding the medals to the veterans’ heirs who submit documented claims establishing a line of descent from the veteran to themselves. Persons documenting the most direct line of descent from one of the Union soldiers for whom a medal is available will receive the medal at the end of a six-month period following submission of the claim to:

West Virginia Archives and History
Building 9
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E.
Charleston, WV 25305

To apply for one of these medals or to see more information about them please go to our website link:

<https://archive.wvculture.org/history/archives/civilwarmedals/medals.html>

For further information contact Randy Marcum at (304) 558-0230 X700 or Randolph.Marcum@wv.gov



Classes of Civil War Medals

CLASS I -- “HONORABLY DISCHARGED” -- WHICH HAVE THE FIGURE OF LIBERTY, SCANTILY DRAPED, TO THE RIGHT, WITH BOTH ARMS EXTENDED.

THE CLASS II -- “KILLED IN BATTLE” -- MEDALS SHOW A BATTLE SCENE WITH A MOUNTED OFFICER, SWORD DRAWN LEADING A CHARGE OF UNITED STATES SOLDIERS WITH FIXED BAYONETS AND FLAG FLYING. ALSO ON THE FIELD IS A DISMOUNTED CANNON, DEAD BODIES, AND FLEEING TROOPS.

CLASS III -- “FOR LIBERTY” -- MEDALS ISSUED FOR THOSE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS WHO DIED OF DISEASE AND WOUNDS RECEIVED IN BATTLE, HAVE A CATAFALQUE ON WHICH ARE THE WORDS “DIED IN THE DEFENSE OF HIS COUNTRY.”



The Lewis Family Collection

BY BETHANY ARBAUGH

The West Virginia State Archives recently received a donation of materials pertaining to the Lewis family of Mason County.

The Lewis family legacy in West Virginia began with Colonel Charles Lewis, who settled in Staunton in the early 18th century. After Charles's death at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774, his son, Charles Cameron Lewis I, inherited land in various locations in both Virginia and what is now West Virginia, which eventually passed to Peter Steenberg Lewis (1834-1919).

Peter, a Virginia Military Institute graduate, built the existing Italianate house on Beechwood Farm, focusing on cattle, sheep, and grain. Peter's son, Charles Cameron Lewis (1874-1964), continued the success by establishing a renowned herd of milking Shorthorn cattle and serving as the president of Point Pleasant's Citizens National Bank.

The farm's management transitioned to Charles C. Lewis Jr. (1906-1998), who transformed it into West Virginia's largest dairy farm, later renamed Oldtown Farm. After Charles Jr. died in 1998, John Siedel III, the son of Annette Lewis and John Seidel Jr., managed the farm until its sale in 2001. The family's history encompasses military service, agricultural success, and international experiences, leaving a lasting impact on the region.

The Lewis Family collection includes financial documents, personal letters, official certificates, and photographs spanning from the late 1700s to the early 2000s.



Virgil Lewis Tintype, Lewis Family Collection



Unidentified individuals from photos belonging to Charles Cameron Lewis Jr., Lewis Family Collection



Grant Deadlines

APPLICATIONS POSTED SEPTEMBER 1, 2024
APPLICATIONS DUE NOVEMBER 1, 2024

THE BOARD WILL BEGIN REVIEWING APPLICATIONS IN JANUARY AND THE GRANT WILL RUN CONCURRENT WITH THE STATE FISCAL YEAR (JULY 2025-JUNE 2026)



Deed books from various West Virginia counties

Records Management Preservation Board

BY KYLE CAMPBELL

The Records Management and Preservation Board (RMPB) was created by the West Virginia Legislature in 2000 to establish a program of grants to county governments for records management, public access and preservation purposes. Since 2004, more than six million dollars have been awarded for RMPB records grant projects. All 55 counties have received grant funds since the project's inception. The Statewide Preservation Project (SPP) began in 2011 and has collaborated with 33 county clerk's to digitize deed books; which improves access and preservation of those permanent records.

The RMPB grant program allows county government offices such as the County Clerk, Circuit Clerk, Assessor, Sheriff and Prosecuting Attorney to complete records management and preservation projects that the majority of counties would not be able to do without monetary assistance. Eligible projects the grant program funds fall into five categories which include: personnel costs, records storage and shelving, reformatting, equipment and conservation.

The SPP is a free service to county clerks provided by the RMPB to digitize the county's most important permanent records. At the beginning of the program, the board narrowed the record titles for SPP projects to permanent land records that would be needed in the event of a disaster; those records include the following: deeds, wills, estates, release books and deeds of trust. RMPB staff digitizes deed books with an oversize book scanner that produces an archival quality grayscale image. The grayscale files are converted into a smaller bitonal format and copies are provided to the county clerk to use in their electronic index.



County records



A Word from the Director

As the director of West Virginia Archives and History, a section of the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, I am honored to welcome you to the first edition of West Virginia Archives and History's revived newsletter, [The Archives](#). Similar to our previous newsletter, [West Virginia Archives and History News](#), which ran from 2000 to 2015, the purpose of [The Archives](#) is to inform the public about new collections received by the Archives, upcoming Archives events, and highlight the many wonderful things that we do here at West Virginia Archives and History.

Since 1905, West Virginia Archives and History has been charged with the responsibility of collecting and preserving West Virginia's public records and historical materials and making these materials available to the public.

The materials that we hold within the West Virginia State Archives tell the story of our wonderful state, from long before its establishment during the Civil War to where we are today. There are so many undiscovered stories contained within the countless state history and family history books, newspapers, photographs, maps, video and audio recordings, and various other documents that are in our collections, just waiting to be uncovered by you.

There are many things to do when you visit the Archives Library, such as viewing the current exhibit that is on display showcasing William Henry Edward's [The Butterflies of North America](#), looking through county history books that hold many stories that have been forgotten to time, and sinking your teeth (figuratively, of course) into materials from the collection that spark your interest. So, please, pay us a visit and see what new stories are waiting to be shared with the world by you!

---Aaron Parsons

Contact Us:

West Virginia Archives and History is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 9-5. Located next to the gift shop on the first floor of the Culture Center.

Parking: Bring quarters for metered parking in the visitor lot or park on Virginia St. or Quarrier St. and walk over.

Phone: (304) 558-0230

Mail: Archives and History
The Culture Center,
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E.
Charleston, WV 25305

“Public Documents are the materials for the historian. Without such a collection he, however much inclined, can never do justice to a State. Nor without them, can its people ever have an accurate knowledge of the founding and growth of their institutions; nor of their own development in governmental affairs, educational and other interests. Not only this, but posterity can not have the means of judging, as it might, of the deeds, and principles of action, and of the legislation of ancestors. Thus the State that neglects to preserve its Public Documents, loses much to future generations — to the whole world indeed.”

VIRGIL A. LEWIS, FIRST
STATE ARCHIVIST AND
HISTORIAN





A Word from the Cabinet Secretary

I hope everyone is enjoying the warmer weather and all that Spring has to offer in the Mountain State. This Spring, there are many exciting things happening at the Culture Center and at West Virginia Archives and History. Our archives staff continue to process newly acquired donations of historical materials, such as the Lewis Family Collection, and develop fascinating exhibits featuring items from the Archives collections. The current exhibit, "Butterflies in the Coalfields," features items relating to William Henry Edwards, and will be on display in the Archives Library until June. We hope you enjoy this edition of The Archives newsletter, and it encourages you to visit us more often. There are many wonderful pieces of your history contained within the Archives that are waiting to be discovered, so pay us a visit soon and see what you can find!



Cabinet Secretary Randall Reid-Smith



STATE CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS
TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024
THE WEST VIRGINIA CULTURE CENTER
CHARLESTON, WV

Region 1:

Park Middle School Team 1, Champion
Mountain View School Team 1, Runner-Up

Region 2:

Huntington Middle School Team 2, Champion
Milton Middle School Team 2, Runner-Up

Region 3:

Winfield Middle School Team 1, Champion
Bible Center School, Runner-Up

Region 4:

Summersville Middle School Team 1,
Champion
Summersville Middle School Team 2, Runner-
Up

Region 5:

Edison Middle School Team 1, Champion
Jackson Middle School Team 1, Runner-Up

Region 6:

Sherrard Middle School Team 2, Champion
Sherrard Middle School Team 1, Runner-Up

Region 7:

South Middle School Team 1, Champion
South Middle School Team 2, Runner-Up

Region 8:

Keyser Middle School Team 2, Champion
Frankfort Middle School Team 1, Runner-Up

2024 Play-In Tournament

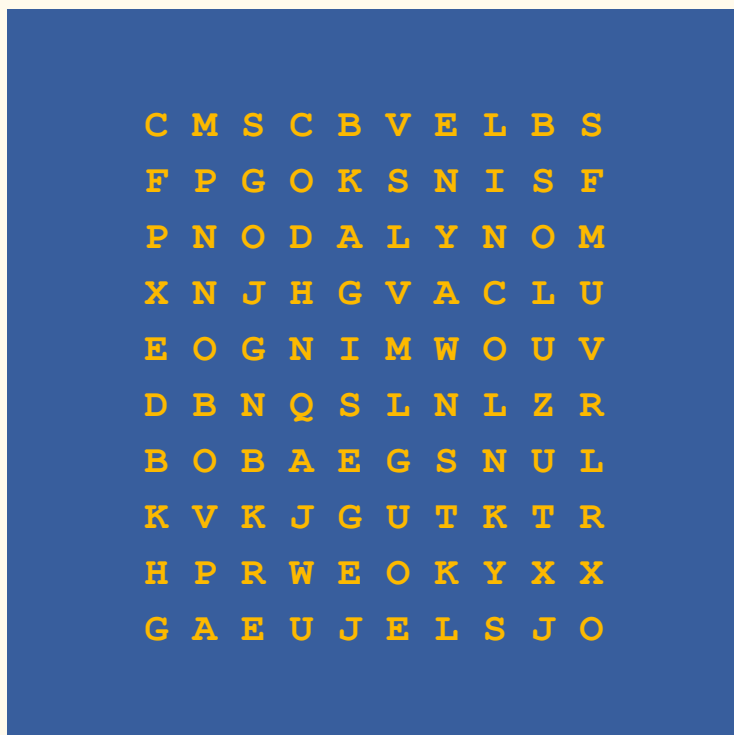
Doddridge Middle School Team 1, Champion
Park Middle School Team 2, Runner-Up
Peterstown Middle School Team 2
Independence Middle School Team 1
Keyser Middle School Team 1
Mountaineer Middle School
Cameron High School Team 1
Madison Middle School



Upcoming Events

History Bowl State Championship	April 30, 2024
Primary Election Day	May 14, 2024
Memorial Day	May 27, 2024
Vandalia	May 24-26, 2024
Juneteenth	June 19, 2024
West Virginia Day	June 20, 2024

Children's Corner



Word Key

Lincoln
Boone
Mingo

Logan
Wayne



Current Staff

Director:
Aaron Parsons

Secretary:
Lucy Hill

Documents Archivist:
Bethany Arbaugh

Historian/Digital Archivist (Digital Preservation,
Archives and History Website, History Day):
Mary Johnson

Audiovisual Archivist:
Richard Fauss

Photo Archivist:
Matthew Miller

Cultural Program Coordinator (History Bowl,
Highway Historic Marker Program):
Ella Preece

Microfilm Specialist:
Harold Newman

Historian (Map Collection, Civil War Medals):
Randy Marcum

Archives Library

Library Manager/Assistant Director:
Debra Basham

Librarian:
Matt Dailey

Librarian:
Michael Shock

State Documents Specialist:

Newspaper and Periodicals/Research Specialist:

Programming/Research Specialist:
Meredith Barbery

County Records

County Records Archivist (Records Management
and Preservation Board):
Kyle Campbell

Cultural Program Specialist (County Records):
Ryan Belmont