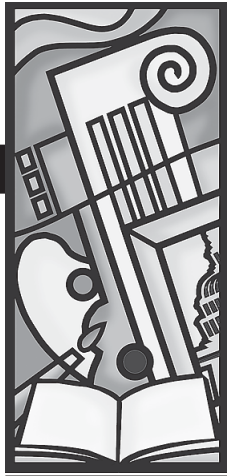


# West Virginia Archives & History NEWS

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WEST VIRGINIA  
DIVISION OF  
CULTURE & HISTORY

## From the Editor:

*The Archives and History Library has shipped a larger than usual order to the bindery this month.* If you can not find a title that appears in the library catalog, please ask the Library staff to check the Current Bindery List available at both the Copy Desk and the Reference Desk. Chances are that any book acquired in the last six months or so that was not hardbound when received has gone to the bindery. Several old favorites needed to be rebound, as well. While I can not give an exact date, the newly bound books will probably be back on the Library shelves by the end of June. You will find many additions to the New Titles shelves at that time, since we received a large donation of birth, death, marriage and census books (most for Jackson County, Ohio) from Mining Your History Foundation. We appreciate your patience while these books are being prepared for a longer shelf life of public use.

## West Virginia Adjutant General Papers, 1861–1865, and West Virginia State Service Commission Papers

In 1911, “Mr. Thompson” of the Office of the Adjutant General brought boxes of both wartime and postwar correspondence related to the Civil War to Virgil Lewis, the state archivist and historian. Lewis died the following year, never having an opportunity to work with the documents. Over the years there have been several attempts made to organize these letters and documents originally held by the West Virginia Adjutant General, but none were successfully completed until Terry Lowry, Civil War historian and an Archives and History Library Assistant, began to go through more than 35 boxes of material. The documents are almost entirely for Union service, with a few Confederate documents that were captured material. Lowry found the search through the boxes was “like

Christmas every day.” Some of the treasures he uncovered:

- Letters and papers of unexpected people, such as Clara Barton, Civil War nurse, and General Winfield Scott Hancock, hero of Gettysburg.
- One of the largest collections in the country of letters of General Joseph Andrew Jackson Lightburn of Lewis County.
- Correspondence of General Thomas Maley Harris and of General John Hunt Oley.
- Letter from Montgomery Meigs, Quartermaster of the United States.
- Letters from several governors of different states.

There were disappointments, too. Lowry thought he had a good chance of finding letters signed by General George McClellan, General George Armstrong Custer, and perhaps even by President Abraham Lincoln, but he

did not. Custer commanded a lot of West Virginia troops, so the absence of any of Custer’s correspondence was especially surprising.

Even among the expected documents Lowry found little gems that either shed light on little known areas of Civil War history or raised new questions for researchers to ponder. An example is a letter from General Elijah Scammon, who was in command of the Kanawha Valley at one point, proposing creation of a “secret service” type organization of soldiers to work in the surrounding counties. Such an organization called “Blazer’s Scouts” was known to exist, and probably was the result of Scammon’s idea, as implied in printed histories of the group. This primary source document supports that assumption.

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The papers are primarily organized by Union regimental units. Anything not related to a specific unit is organized by type of record or format of document. If a researcher does not know the regiment of a given person, the Archives and History Library offers several indexes that can be used to determine the correct regiment to search. The Archives and History Web site has listings by unit or category, with the number of related documents to be found for each. The Union Civil War militia records that were on the Web site prior to the addition of the Adjutant General papers are still posted and are now broken down in the same format. There are no photographs and few battle reports. The majority of the battle reports went to Washington,

## West Virginia Day Activities at Independence Hall

West Virginia Independence Hall in Wheeling will be hosting "Confederate Guerilla Surprise—The Capture of Generals Crook and Kelley," with Jack Bowman as speaker, on June 16 at 7:00 p.m. Bowman is Jackson & Kelly Professor of Law Emeritus at West Virginia University.

On West Virginia Day, June 20, Independence Hall will be the site of children's programs conducted by Jackson's Mill in the morning and the afternoon, including woodworking, corn grinding, candle dipping and spinning. A ceremony of speeches and song at noon will be followed by a birthday cake for West Virginia. Other activities include a Civil War concert by the Wildcat Regiment Band, a Ladies' Tea, and a showing of the video of the Mock Trial, "Virginia vs. West Virginia." All events are free and open to the public.

DC, not to the state Adjutant General, but the few we have are listed on the Web site. (Lowry says the battle report for the Battle of Piedmont in Virginia in 1864 is a good one, though. Ask for Ar382, Box 29, Folder 6.)

Please note that with a few exceptions the documents themselves are not available on the Web site. Any of the documents may be viewed in the Archives and History Library, but not all of the documents may be photocopied. Some are too large, others are too fragile, and all are subject to the judgment of the staff for feasibility of photocopying.

A set of related documents, the West Virginia State Service Commission papers, have also been organized and are now available. In 1901 the West Virginia Legislature authorized a one time lump sum reimbursement for people who served in the Union militia but who were not paid during the war. Individuals had to file an application offering proof of their service and of lack of payment at the time of service. These application forms are very similar to Civil War pension application forms. The Service Commission papers in the West Virginia Adjutant General Papers collection are organized by county, then alphabetically by surname of the applicant. These forms, entitled *Application of Home Guard or Militiaman for Pay Under Act of the*

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### Permission to reprint articles from *West Virginia Archives and History News* is granted, provided:

(1) The reprint is not used for commercial purposes, and (2) the following notice appears at the end of the reprinted material: Previously published in *West Virginia Archives and History News*, [Volume and issue numbers], [Month, Year], a publication of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

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*Legislature of West Virginia, Approved February 22, 1901*, like pension applications, are great sources for family history or for local historians of Civil War activity. Examples:

- Widows and other surviving family members of deceased veterans applied for payment. Besides identifying the next of kin of the soldier, copies of wills, affidavits of relationship, letters from estate executors, and letters giving death dates and other information are often included with the application forms.
- An application may have been filed from a different West Virginia county than expected by the genealogist. Without an 1890 census extant, this may help locate someone who couldn't be found in the expected location in the 1900 census, who moved in with a relative of the same surname, or who moved soon after the 1900 census was taken.
- Some of the letters are from West Virginians who moved to other states after the war, but wrote to the West Virginia Adjutant General inquiring about militia pay when they learned about the offer.
- Some applications are for men known by their families to have served in the Home Guard or Union Militia, but whose names don't appear on any of the other rolls.
- On the applications and in accompanying letters many veterans detailed when and where they served, and sometimes described the action in which they were involved.
- Applicants had to provide affidavits from people with whom they served as part of their evidence of service, which in turn can provide information about the writers of the affidavits that may not be recorded elsewhere.
- Actual signatures of the living veterans.

Some of the information is of great

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interest to Civil War historians in general and to West Virginia historians in particular, and can not be found anywhere else, particularly the accounts of guerilla and partisan warfare. This type of action was seldom recorded in regular military records of the time. As a side note, although these documents have great value to today's researchers in history and genealogy, few of the veterans who filed them ever received any payment from West Virginia. Faced with large numbers of applicants, the Commission decided to pay only those claims for which there was solid proof of service (excluding affidavits) and for which previous failure to receive payment at the time of the service could be proven. Held to this tough standard, only a small percentage of veterans could qualify for payment.

For more information on this and related collections, you may visit these areas of our Web site, [www.wvculture.org/history](http://www.wvculture.org/history):

- **West Virginia Adjutant General's Papers, 1861-1865**, at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ag/ag.html>
- **West Virginia Union Militia in the Civil War**, at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/wvmemory/militia/wvunmil.html>
- **West Virginia Union Regiments**, at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ag/regiments.html>
- **Pierpont-Samuels Papers**, at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ag/pierpont.html>
- **West Virginia State Service Commission Papers**, at <http://www.wvculture.org/history/ag/wvssc.html>

We hope you will explore the wealth of material in these collections. Individual family and local history researchers may request to view the documents in the West Virginia Archives and History Library, or may request limited searches by research

## 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.

**MEMORIAL DAY, May 30:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**“CONFEDERATE GUERILLA SURPRISE—THE CAPTURE OF GENERALS CROOK AND KELLEY,”**

**June 16:** Jack Bowman, speaker, Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**WEST VIRGINIA DAY ACTIVITIES,**

**June 20:** Independence Hall, Wheeling.

**WEST VIRGINIA DAY, June 20:** Archives Library will be open.\*

**INDEPENDENCE DAY, July 4:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**LABOR DAY, September 5:** Archives Library will be *closed*.

**COLUMBUS DAY, October 10:** Archives Library will be open.\*

**VETERANS DAY, November 11:** Archives Library will be open.\*

**HISTORY DAY, February 16, 2006:**

The Capitol Complex, Charleston.

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

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

letter. Researchers who will need to view large volumes of material, especially if over a period of more than one day, are asked to contact archivist Debra Basham in advance at [debra.basham@wvculture.org](mailto:debra.basham@wvculture.org), or

### West Virginia Division of Culture and History Boards

The West Virginia Division of Culture and History provides guidance and staff support to several boards, who in turn set policy and make decisions to be carried out under the auspices of the agency. Currently these boards are the West Virginia Archives and History Commission, the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, the

(304) 558-0230, Ext. 702. Even if the Civil War and military history are not of interest to you, we hope you will appreciate the role of the West Virginia State Archives in both preserving state documents and making them accessible to the public.

Capitol Building Commission, and the Records Management and Preservation Board. For a list of current Commission members and a brief description of the responsibilities of each board, visit our Web site at <http://www.wvculture.org/agency/boards.html>.

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West Virginia  
**Archives & History**  
**NEWS**



**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  
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 or by e-mail: [susan.scouras@wvculture.org](mailto:susan.scouras@wvculture.org).

## Archives and History Staff

<b>Fredrick Armstrong</b> .....	Director
<b>Debra Basham</b> .....	Archivist (photographs, special collections)
<b>Constance Baston</b> .....	Researcher (Veterans Memorial Archives)
<b>Greg Carroll</b> .....	Historian (Civil War, Native American history)
<b>Dick Fauss</b> .....	Archivist (microfilm and moving images collection)
<b>Allen Fowler</b> .....	Special projects
<b>Elaine Gates</b> .....	Library Assistant (microfilming and microfilm repairs)
<b>Joe Geiger</b> .....	Assistant Director (Historian, Web page)
<b>Ed Hicks</b> .....	Photographer (archival photography, darkroom)
<b>Mary Johnson</b> .....	Historian ( <i>West Virginia History</i> )
<b>Terry Lowry</b> .....	Library Assistant (Civil War)
<b>Cathy Miller</b> .....	Library Assistant (WV State documents, periodicals)
<b>Sharon Newhouse</b> .....	Secretary
<b>Harold Newman</b> .....	Library Assistant (microfilming, Revolutionary War)
<b>Pat Pleska</b> .....	Manager of the Veterans Memorial Archives
<b>Susan Scouras</b> .....	Librarian (cataloging, Kentucky, library collection, newsletter editor)
<b>Jaime Simmons</b> .....	Library Assistant (records of the 1700's and early 1800's, Pennsylvania)
<b>Bobby Taylor</b> .....	Library Manager
<b>Nancy Waggoner</b> .....	Secretary
<b>Intern</b> .....	Shari Haywood
<b>Volunteers</b> .....	Carolyn Conner, Bill Kelley, Angela Tolbert, Bob and Lucile Foster, John McClure, Carol de la Riva, Lorene Mullins, and Kellis and Virginia Gillespie