

# West Virginia Research Outline

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This outline describes major sources of information about families from West Virginia. As you read this outline, study the *United States Research Outline*, (30972) which will help you understand terminology and the contents and uses of genealogical records. Also use the *Virginia Research Outline* to learn about many pre-1863 Virginia records that apply to West Virginia families.

## RECORDS OF THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY

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The Family History Library has most of the records listed in this outline. The major holdings include 12,000 microfilms of vital records, court records, newspapers, deeds, surveys, and wills. The library has excellent records for most counties for the 1800s and many vital records to about 1970. There are few records for Lincoln County (whose records were destroyed by fire) and Mingo County (which was created in 1895 from Logan county).

Some of the sources described in this outline list the Family History Library's book, microfilm, and microfiche numbers. These are preceded by *FHL*, the abbreviation for *Family History Library*. These numbers may be used to locate materials in the Family History Library and to order microfilm and microfiche at Family History Centers.

## FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG

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The library's records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog found at the Family History Library and at each local Family History Center. To find a record, look in the Locality Search of the Family History Library Catalog for:

- The *place* where your ancestor lived, such as:

**UNITED STATES** - CENSUS

**WEST VIRGINIA** - GENEALOGY

**WEST VIRGINIA, KANAWHA** - VITAL RECORDS

**WEST VIRGINIA, KANAWHA, CHARLESTON** - NEWSPAPERS

- The *record type* you want to search, such as:

UNITED STATES - **CENSUS**

WEST VIRGINIA - **GENEALOGY**

WEST VIRGINIA, KANAWA - **VITAL RECORDS**

WEST VIRGINIA, KANAWA, CHARLESTON - **NEWSPAPERS**

The section headings in this outline match the names of record types used in the Family History Library Catalog.

## ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

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The following archives, libraries, and societies have collections or services helpful to genealogical researchers.

- Archives and History Library

Division of Culture and History

The Cultural Center

Capitol Complex

Charleston, WV 25305-0300

Telephone: 304-558-0220

Fax: 304-558-2779

- National Archives—Mid-Atlantic Region

9th and Market Streets

Philadelphia, PA 19107-4292

Telephone: 215-597-3000  
Fax: 215-597-2303

- West Virginia Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 172  
Elkview, WV 25071

- West Virginia Collection

West Virginia University Library  
Colson Hall  
P.O. Box 6069  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6069  
Telephone: 304-293-3640  
Fax: 304-293-6923

A useful guide to this collection is James W. Hess, *Guide to Manuscripts and Archives in the West Virginia Collection* (Morgantown, W.Va.: West Virginia University Library, 1974; FHL book 975.4 A5h; 1959 edition by Charles Shetler, is on film 940918 item 4).

- Library of Virginia (State Library)

800 East Broad St.  
Richmond, VA 23219-1905  
Telephone: 804-692-3888  
Fax: 804-692-3556

The Virginia State Library is an important resource for pre-1863 West Virginia research. To learn more about the history and record-keeping systems of West Virginia counties, use the 13 inventories of the county archives published by the Historical Records Survey around 1940. The Family History Library has copies of all of these inventories. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under WEST VIRGINIA - ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES.

The Historical Records Survey also compiled unpublished (manuscript) inventories for the records of most West Virginia counties. These are available on microfilm at the Family History Library. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under WEST VIRGINIA, [COUNTY] - COURT RECORDS - INVENTORIES, REGISTERS, CATALOGS.

## **Computer Networks and Bulletin Boards**

Computers with modems can be useful tools for obtaining information from selected archives and libraries. In a way, computer networks themselves serve as a library. The Internet, certain computer bulletin boards, and commercial on-line services help family history researchers:

- Locate other researchers
- Post queries
- Send and receive E-mail
- Search large databases
- Search computer libraries
- Join in computer chat and lecture sessions

You can find computerized research tips and information about ancestors from West Virginia in a variety of sources at local, state, national, and international levels. The list of sources is growing rapidly. Most of the information is available at no cost.

Addresses on the Internet change frequently. As of April 1997, the following sites are important gateways linking you to many more network and bulletin board sites:

- USGenWeb

<http://usgenweb.org/>

A cooperative effort by many volunteers to list genealogical databases, libraries, bulletin boards, and other resources available on the Internet for each county, state, and country.

- Roots-L

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/roots-l/>

A useful list of sites and resources. Includes a large, regularly-updated research coordination list.

For further details about using computer networks, bulletin boards, and news groups for family history research, see the *United States Research Outline* (30972), 2nd ed., "Archives and Libraries" section.

## FamilySearch™

The Family History Library and some Family History Centers have computers with FamilySearch™. FamilySearch is a collection of computer files containing several million names. FamilySearch is a good place to begin your research. Some of the records come from compiled sources; some have been automated from original sources.

## BIBLE RECORDS

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The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) collection contains many West Virginia Bible records. This collection is described in the "Genealogy" section of this outline and is partially indexed by E. Kay Kirkham, *An Index to Some of the Family Records of the Southern States* (Logan, Utah: Everton Publishers, 1979; FHL book 973 D22kk v. 1; fiche 6089183).

## BIOGRAPHY

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You can usually find biographical information in state, regional, and county histories. An excellent source of biographical information on past and present West Virginians is Jim Comstock, *West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia* and the supplemental series (see the “History” section of this outline).

An index to biographical sketches in several hundred local histories and genealogies is P. G. Wardell, *Timesaving Aid to Virginia-West Virginia Ancestors: A Genealogical Index of Surnames from Published Sources*, 4 vols. (Athens, Ga.: Iberian Publishing Co., 1990; FHL book 975 D22w).

Representative biographical sources at the Family History Library are:

Atkinson, George Wesley. *Prominent Men of West Virginia*. Wheeling, W. Va.: W. L. Callin, 1890. (FHL film 1000648 item 3).

Callaham, James Morton. *History of West Virginia, Old and New*. 3 vols. Chicago: American Historical Society, 1923. (FHL book 975.4 H2c; vol. 1 on film 1425634 item 4 and vols. 2-3 on film 1698201 items 1-2.) Volumes two and three are biographical.

*Men of West Virginia*. 2 vols. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1903. (FHL book 975.4 D3; film 874390 items 1-2.)

Miller, Thomas Condit, and Hu Maxwell. *West Virginia and Its People*. 3 vols. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1913. (FHL book 975.4 H2mw; film 1000646.) Volumes two and three include family and personal histories.

## CEMETERIES

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The Family History Library has a good collection of cemetery records from West Virginia. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under each specific county.

The West Virginia Historical Records Survey compiled the *Cemetery Readings in West Virginia in 1939 and 1940* (FHL films 250207-10). This is a large collection of cemetery descriptions, locations, and tombstone inscriptions. These records are described in the Family History Library Catalog under each county. The original documents are at the West Virginia University Library.

An important collection of cemetery records for Harrison County and some adjacent localities is also at the Family History Library (FHL films 163926-31). The original records are part of the Guy W. Tetrick collection (described in the “Genealogy” section of this outline).

The West Virginia State Archives has a partial card index to tombstone inscriptions. The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) collection (described in the “Genealogy”

section) also contains numerous cemetery records.

## CENSUS

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Many federal census records are found at the Family History Library, the National Archives, and other federal and state archives. The *United States Research Outline* provides more detailed information about these records.

The Family History Library has the U.S. federal censuses of West Virginia from 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920. West Virginia was part of Virginia in the pre-1870 censuses. The 1790, 1800, half of the 1810, and the 1890 censuses have been lost or destroyed. The 1890 Union veterans schedule (FHL films 338268-69) and a published index are available at the Family History Library and at the National Archives.

For the missing 1790 census use the two substitutes listed below. These are based on state censuses and tax lists. Each covers different counties. Most of present-day West Virginia is included in the second item, but both must be used for a complete search of West Virginia.

Fothergill, Augusta B., and John Mark Naugle. *Virginia Tax Payers, 1782-87, Other than Those Published by the United States Census Bureau*. 1940. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1966. (FHL book 975.5 R4f 1966; film 874197 item 4.) This includes areas of Augusta, Berkley, Hardy, and Montgomery counties in Virginia that later became part of West Virginia.

*Heads of Families . . . Records of the State Enumerations: 1782 to 1785, Virginia*. 1908. Reprint. Baltimore: Southern Book Co., 1952. (FHL book 975.5 X2us 1790; film 874193 item 4.)

Also see the “Taxation” section of this outline for information about other tax lists which may be used as substitutes for the 1790 and 1800 censuses.

For the missing portions of the 1810 census use Netti Schreiner-Yantis, *A Supplement to the 1810 Census of Virginia: Tax Lists of the Counties for Which the Census is Missing* (Springfield, Va: Genealogical Books in Print, 1971; FHL book 975.5 R4s). This includes information from Cabell, Greenbrier, Hardy, and Tazewell counties (and 15 Virginia counties) that are missing from the 1810 census.

Published indexes are available for the 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses. There are published indexes of all counties for 1880 plus a combined index. There are soundex (phonetic) indexes on microfilm for part of the 1880 and all of the 1900, 1910, and 1920 censuses.

The Family History Library and the Archives and History Library have mortality schedules on microfilm for 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. The schedules for 1860 and 1870 are indexed.

There are no state censuses for West Virginia except the 1782 to 1785 state censuses noted above.

## CHURCH RECORDS

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The Church of England (now Protestant Episcopal) was the established church in Virginia (including West Virginia) from 1624 to 1786. Other major religious groups in West Virginia were the Baptist, Methodist Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and United Brethren churches.

The **Historical Records Survey** produced detailed inventories of existing church records for the Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Protestant, and Episcopal churches. The Family History Library has copies of these inventories. W. Guy Tetrick also surveyed and described the records of many West Virginia churches (FHL **film 163930**).

Church records from various denominations are available at the West Virginia University and the Archives and History Library. The Family History Library has a few original church records from West Virginia and some published histories.

Many church records are also available at the Virginia State Library. To learn about this collection, see Jewell T. Clark, and Elizabeth Terry Long, ***A Guide to Church Records in the Archives Branch of the Virginia State Library*** (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981; FHL book 975.5 K23c).

Many denominations have collected their records into central repositories. You can write to the following addresses to learn where their records are located.

### **Baptist**

West Virginia Baptist Historical Society  
Route #2 Box 304  
Ripley WV 25271  
Telephone 304-346-2036

### **Methodist**

Methodist Historical Society  
West Virginia Wesleyan College  
Annie M. Pfeiffer Library  
College Avenue  
Buckhannon, WV 26201

Telephone: 304-473-8059  
Fax: 304-473-8888

### **Episcopal**

Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia  
1608 Virginia Street East  
Charleston, WV 25311  
Telephone: 304-344-3597  
Fax: 304-343-3295

Most of the early parish registers are incomplete or missing, but those still existing are at the Virginia State Library. An excellent published history is George W. Peterkin, *A History and Record of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of West Virginia* (Charleston, W.Va.: Tribune Co., 1902; FHL book 975.4 K2p).

### **Roman Catholic**

Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston  
1300 Byron Street  
P.O. Box 230  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
Telephone: 304-233-0880  
Fax: 304-233-0890

### **United Brethren**

Historical Library  
Church of the Brethren  
1451 Dundee Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60120  
Telephone: 847-742-5100  
Fax: 847-742-6103

## **COURT RECORDS**

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West Virginia was part of Virginia until 1863 and had the same court jurisdictions as Virginia counties. For information on courts changed or abolished prior to 1863, see the *Virginia Research Outline*.

West Virginia courts that have kept records of genealogical value include the following:

- 1863-pres.      *Supreme Court of Appeals* is the highest state court. It hears appeals from the circuit courts. The library does not have records from this court.
- 1852-pres.      *Circuit courts* have jurisdiction in from one to four counties over criminal, civil, and equity cases, including divorces. They also serve as an appellate court for county, statutory, and other inferior courts. From 1809 to 1852 they were



known as circuit superior courts of law. The Family History Library has some circuit court records, such as Kanawha County law records and issue dockets (1831-83), fee books (1808-1919), and chancery records (1831-1930).

1643-1863  
1863-pres.

**County courts** have countywide jurisdiction over probates and guardianships. Their primary responsibility is to serve as the administrative body of the county. They have custody over documents such as leases, deeds and judgements. From 1863 to 1872 this court was abolished. Its judicial functions were handled by the circuit courts and its administrative functions by a board of supervisors established in each township. It was reestablished in 1872 with its former jurisdictions. Many of the supervisors' records are in the custody of the county courts. The Family History Library has many county court records, such as over 300 microfilms of various Kanawha County Court records from 1773 to the early 1900s.

1863-pres. **Statutory courts** were created at various times by special acts of the state legislature. The jurisdiction of these courts varies but may include limited civil cases, domestic relations, and appeals from municipal and justice courts. They exist in various counties (usually the most populous) under different names such as **criminal courts**, **intermediate courts**, or **common pleas courts**. Statutory courts with general criminal jurisdiction and some civil jurisdiction exist in Cabell, Harrison, Kanawha, McDowell, Marion, Mercer, Ohio, and Raleigh counties. Statutory courts with limited civil jurisdiction only are in Cabell, Hancock, Kanawha, Marshall, and Wood counties. The Family History Library has records of some of these courts, such as 13 microfilms from the Intermediate Court of Marion county including chancery and law orders from 1893 to 1919.

1863-pres.

**Municipal courts** have citywide jurisdiction over misdemeanors and preliminary hearings for felonies. The library has some records of these courts on microfilm.

1863-pres.

**Justice courts** have been established in magisterial districts (there are three to ten districts in each county). These courts have jurisdiction over minor criminal (misdemeanor) and civil cases involving less than \$300. A justice of the peace usually turned over the dockets and records of his court to his successor and many of these records have been lost. Beginning about 1917 the justice gave quarterly lists of fines and payments to the county courts. Some of the justice court records are at county courthouses. The Family History Library has very few copies of these records.

## Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has copies of court record books, order books, dockets, and indexes from the 1770s to about 1875, and to the 1930s for some counties. Other records are available at the various county courthouses or the Archives and History Library.

The early court records of Augusta county are available in Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scots-Irish Settlement in Virginia: Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1754-1800*, 3 vols., 1912, Reprint (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1980; 1912 edition is on FHL films 162043-44).

## DIRECTORIES

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Directories of heads of households have been published for major cities in West Virginia. For example, the Family History Library has directories for:

- Charleston

1899-1900      FHL film 940405 item 4  
1922, 1930, 1940 FHL book 975.437 E4p

- Huntington

1899-1900      FHL film 940405 item 4  
1930              FHL book 975.442/H1 E4p

- Wheeling

1839              FHL fiche 6044636  
1851              FHL fiche 6044637  
1899-1900      FHL film 940405 item 4  
1903/4-1934    FHL films 1760298-303  
1921-1922      FHL book 975.41 E4p

## EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

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### People

The settlement of present-day West Virginia began in the mid-1700s when Scotch-Irish and German settlers from Pennsylvania came to the area that is now Berkeley and Greenbriar counties. Heavy settlement began in the 1760s after Indian claims had been

settled. These pioneers were generally from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and other northern states and not from Virginia or other areas east of the mountains.

In the early and mid-1800s, many Germans and Irish came directly to West Virginia. A few Blacks were brought to the region in the early years, but many more came after the Civil War to work in the coal mines. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, large numbers of immigrants arrived from Ireland and from southern and eastern Europe, especially Hungary, Italy, and Poland.

## Records

Philadelphia was an important port of entry to West Virginia, but the major port between 1870 and 1915 was New York, where thousands of European immigrants boarded labor trains headed for the coal fields. The Family History Library and the National Archives have passenger lists for New York for 1820 to 1919, and indexes for 1820 to 1846 and 1897 to 1943. The lists for Philadelphia date from 1800 to 1916 with indexes for 1800 to 1948. More detailed information on U.S. immigration sources is in the *United States Research Outline*.

Names of colonial immigrants to America that have been listed in published sources are indexed in P. William Filby, *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*. 15 vols. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1981-; FHL book 973 W32p; some volumes are on films beginning with 1597960 items 4-6). The first three volumes are a combined alphabetical index published in 1981. Supplemental volumes have been issued annually. There are also later cumulative indexes.

The early court records of Augusta county through 1800, which include many of the first settlers of West Virginia, have been published in Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scots-Irish Settlement in Virginia* (see the "Court Records" section of this outline).

Records of ethnic groups such as Italians and Jews are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under WEST VIRGINIA - MINORITIES.

## GAZETTEERS

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Many place names can be found in the *West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia* (see the "History" section of this outline). Other sources of information about places in West Virginia are:

Gannett, Henry. *A Gazetteer of Virginia and West Virginia*. 1904. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1975. (FHL book 975 E5gh; film 928042 item 4.)

Kenny, Hamill T. *West Virginia Place Names: Their Origin and Meaning*. Piedmont, W. Va.: Place Names Press, 1945. (FHL book 975.4 E5k.)

## GENEALOGY

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Most archives, historical societies, and genealogical societies have special collections and indexes of genealogical value. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of many important research collections.

### Manuscript Collections

**Willis Guy Tetrick Collection.** This collection consists of family and other records of Harrison County and central West Virginia. The original collection is in the possession of the Tetrick family in Clarksburg, West Virginia and may be searched by appointment. Microfilm copies are available at the West Virginia University Library and at the Family History Library.

One portion of the collection is listed in the Family History Library Catalog under WEST VIRGINIA, HARRISON - GENEALOGY. This includes the *Family Records of Harrison County, West Virginia*. (FHL films 163723-838) and the *Family Sheets, an Uncompleted Survey for a "Genealogical History of Harrison County, West Virginia"* (FHL films 163848-96) which are arranged alphabetically.

Another portion of the Tetrick collection consists of transcripts of county records, cemetery records, Sons of the American Revolution applications, and newspaper obituaries. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under the specific counties or cities (and record types).

**Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Collection.** This collection consists of transcripts of Bible, cemetery, church, marriage, death, obituary, and probate records. It was microfilmed in 1970 at the DAR Library in Washington, D.C. and is available on 44 films at the Family History Library. The volumes are generally arranged by county and many have individual indexes. See the Author/Title Search of the Family History Library Catalog under DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION - WEST VIRGINIA.

**Elisha B. Iams Collection.** This is a collection of over 70 volumes of information. It was extracted from the records of 16 counties in southwest Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio and thus is an important source of information about early Virginia and Pennsylvania settlers. It includes a card index with 6,500 entries. The collection has not been microfilmed. It is available at the Citizen's Library, 55 S. College Street, Washington, PA 15301.

**West Virginia University Library, Genealogies.** This is a collection of alphabetized pedigrees and genealogies of West Virginia families. It is available at the Family History Library (FHL films 239244-53).

**Smith-Rife Collection of New River Genealogy and Local History.** This collection by Aubrey O. Smith and Winton A. Rife relates mainly to families from Boone, Fayette,

Greenbriar, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, and Wyoming counties, and some southeast border counties. The original collection is at the Archives and History Library.

The collection is available on microfilm at the Family History Library in two parts. The family section (FHL films 1036968-77) consists of loose alphabetized papers such as family group records, obituaries, newspaper clippings, Bible records, pedigrees, and cemetery records for 189 major families. The locality section (FHL films 1036978-80) contains cemetery transcriptions, church records, county courthouse abstracts, and other records, arranged by county.

*Genealogical Records of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, 18th Century to 1975* by Hazel Hansrote. This handwritten collection of genealogies and research extracts is alphabetized by surname. It is useful for finding information about Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania families who settled the West Augusta District (see the "History" section). It is available on microfilm at the Family History Library (FHL films 984210-17).

## Published Sources

An excellent source for information on early families and settlers of West Virginians is Jim Comstock, *West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia* and the supplemental series (see the "History" section of this outline).

You may also want to consult Earl G. Swem, *Virginia Historical Index* (see the "Periodicals" section) for references to genealogical information published in several outstanding historical and genealogical periodicals. Also see Wardell's, *Time Saving Aid to Virginia-West Virginia Ancestors* (see the "Biography" section).

Other published sources include:

Brown, Stuart E., Jr. *Virginia Genealogies, A Trial List of Printed Books and Pamphlets*. 3 vols. Berryville, Va.: Virginia Book Co., 1967-89. (FHL book 975.5 D23b.) This set indexes about 4,000 family histories from manuscripts and books and periodicals published before 1980. This is a supplement to Robert Armistead Stewart's book, mentioned below.

Stewart, Robert Armistead. *Index to Printed Virginia Genealogies*. 1930. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co, 1970. (FHL book 975.5 D22s 1970; the 1965 reprint edition is on film 962558 item 2 and on fiche 6019375.) This book lists indexes about 650 Virginia family histories published before 1930.

Wardell, Patrick G. *Virginians & West Virginians, 1607-1870*. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1986-1992, 3 vols. in 4. (FHL book 975 D2wp.) Includes genealogical data abstracted from *History of Virginia*, 6 vols. (New York: American Historical Society, 1924; FHL book 975.5 H2a; films 1421672 item 11 and 1321473) and an index to the biographical volumes of that history.

Butcher, Bernard Lee. *Genealogical and Personal History of the Upper Monongahela Valley, West Virginia*. 3 vols. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1912. (FHL book 975.4 D2b; film 1000647.)

*History of the Great Kanawha Valley: With Family History and Biographical Sketches*. 2 vols. Madison, Wis.: Brant, Fuller & Co., 1891. (FHL film 1000648 items 1-2.)

## HISTORY

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The following important events in the history of West Virginia affected political boundaries, record keeping, and family movements. See the *Virginia Research Outline* for additional information about the earlier history and records of the area that became West Virginia.

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|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1731-1734 | Morgan Morgan, the first white settler in West Virginia established a home in Berkeley County, Virginia.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1738      | Frederick and Augusta counties were formed from Orange County, Virginia. Frederick County included territory later in the Eastern panhandle of West Virginia and began functioning in 1743. Augusta County encompassed all the area west of the Blue Ridge mountains north of the Carolinas and began functioning in 1745.              |
| 1753      | Hampshire County, Virginia was created. This was the first county whose boundaries were within present-day West Virginia.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1775      | West Augusta District was established by Virginia and included all of West Virginia and western Pennsylvania. Ownership of part of this district was disputed with Pennsylvania.                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1779      | Virginia ceded most of the northern part of West Augusta District to Pennsylvania after Pennsylvania agreed to accept land grants that Virginia had made in the disputed region.                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1784      | Virginia ceded its claims north of the Ohio River to the United States but reserved a section known as the Virginia Military District for Revolutionary War bounty land.                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1788      | Virginia ratified the constitution and became a state.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1861-1865 | In a dispute over secession, fifty western counties broke off to form the “restored government of Virginia,” which remained loyal to the Union. The state of West Virginia was admitted to the Union in 1863. During the Civil War, about 32,000 West Virginia soldiers enlisted in the Union Army, while 9,000 served the Confederacy. |

1870s Industrial expansion in West Virginia attracted Black immigrants from southern states and European immigrants from overseas.

Sources for studying the history of West Virginia include:

*The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia. 25 vols.* Richwood, W. Va.: Jim Comstock, 1976. (FHL book 975.4 H26w; fiche 6051466-490.) This primarily includes biographical and geographical sketches from other published sources. This serves as a partial index to the *Supplemental Series*.

*The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia: Supplemental Series. 25 vols.* Richwood, W. Va.: Jim Comstock, 1974. (FHL book 975.4 H26wa; vols. 12-13 on film 1321160 item 9; vols. 1-25 on fiche 6051350.) This contains reprints of several articles and books related to West Virginia history and people.

Rice, Otis K. *West Virginia: A History.* Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1985. (FHL book 975.4 H2ric.)

Helpful bibliographies of West Virginia local histories are:

Forbes, Harold M. *West Virginia History: A Bibliography & Guide to Research.* Morgantown, W. Va.; West Virginia University Press, 1981. (FHL book 975.4 H2f.)  
Daughters of the American Revolution, West Virginia. *Bibliography of Local History and Genealogy.* N.p.: 1965. (FHL film 940922.) This is a helpful index to books and articles on West Virginia families.

To determine county boundary changes, see *West Virginia County Formations and Boundary Changes* (Charleston, W. Va.: Historical Records Survey, 1939; FHL book 975.4 E2h). Another helpful source is Sims, *Making a State: Formation of West Virginia* (described in the “Land and Property” section of this outline).

## LAND AND PROPERTY

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### Land Grants

In 1744 Virginia encouraged the settlement of western Virginia by offering land speculators 1,000 acres for each family they brought to settle the frontier. These speculators organized land companies, such as the Greenbriar Company and the Loyal Land Company of Virginia. These companies surveyed the land and sold the surveys to individuals who obtained title by patent from the Secretary of the Colony or, after 1779, from the Virginia Land Office. By 1754 over 2 1/2 million acres had been granted to land companies.

The first warrants for military bounty land in present-day West Virginia were issued in 1782 through the Virginia Land Office. Many soldiers sold their warrants to speculators who resold the land to others (see the “Military Records” section of this outline).

After West Virginia became a state, the state government took possession of all unowned land and continued issuing grants. The original state land grants, sales, and surveys for West Virginia are located at the Office of the State Auditor, Capitol Building, County Collections Div., Building-1 Room W-212, Charleston, WV 25305, Telephone: 304-558-2251, Fax: 304-558-5200. The Archives and History Library has copies of these records. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of these records, including:

- Land grants arranged by counties, 1748-1912 (on 56 FHL films beginning with 521685)
- Land sales, 1860-75 (FHL films 558437-39)
- Plats and surveys, 1863-89 (FHL film 462959)

The office of the state auditor published an index of all identifiable grantees from 1748 to the 1900s in Edgar Barr Sims, *Sims Index to Land Grants in West Virginia* (Charleston: E.B. Sims, 1952; FHL book 975.4 R21w; film 1036828 items 3-4). The grantees are listed alphabetically within the county that issued the grant. The actual grants are on microfilm (see above).

Information on boundary disputes and county formation data (including maps) is in Edgar Barr Sims, *Making a State: Formation of West Virginia* (Charleston: E.B. Sims, 1956; FHL book Q 975.4 R2s). This includes a supplement to the *Sims Index* (see above).

For more information on land grants see the *Virginia Research Outline* and the *United States Research Outline*.

## Transfers of Land between Individuals

Land transactions after the original patent was issued have been recorded in county deed books (often titled *land books*). You can obtain copies by contacting the appropriate clerk's office—usually the clerk of the circuit court.

The Family History Library has microfilm copies of the pre-1900 records for most counties. From Kanawha County, for example, the library has 200 microfilms of lease records (1865-1906), release books (1866-1909), trust deeds (1855-1910), deeds (1790-1946), and homesteads (1874-1944).

## MAPS

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West Virginia University has a sizeable collection of maps. The Family History Library also has several West Virginia maps. A set of detailed topographic maps published 1911-1919 is on FHL film 163986. A helpful statewide atlas is *New Descriptive Atlas of West Virginia* (Clarksburg, W.Va.: Clarksburg Publishing Co., 1933; FHL book Q 975.4 E3n; film 1425710).

Modern county road maps can be purchased from:



West Virginia Department of Highways  
Map Sales  
Capitol Complex Bldg. 5  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East  
Charleston, WV 25305-0430  
Telephone: 304-558-2868  
Topographical maps are available from:  
U.S. Department of Interior  
Geological Survey  
507 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192  
Telephone: 1-800-USA-MAPS  
Telephone: 703-648-6045

## MILITARY RECORDS

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The *U.S. Military Records Research Outline* (34118) provides more information on federal military records and search strategies.

Many military records are found at the Family History Library, the National Archives, and other federal and state archives. The *United States Research Outline* provides more information about federal records. For information on records from the colonial period to 1863, see the *Virginia Research Outline*.

The Archives and History Library has the original adjutant general's records for the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Indian Wars, Civil War (Union and Confederate), and Spanish-American War. These include muster and descriptive rolls, enlistment records, and correspondence.

### Revolutionary War (1775-1783)

Two particularly helpful sources for West Virginia ancestors who participated in the Revolutionary War are:

Johnston, Ross B. *West Virginians in the American Revolution*. 1959. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977. (FHL book 975.4 M2j; the 1959 edition is on fiche 6087736). This includes sketches of over 1,300 soldiers who lived in West Virginia at some time in their life.

Reddy, Anne Waller. *West Virginia Revolutionary Ancestors Whose Services were Non-military*. 1930. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1963. (FHL book 975.4 N2r; film 1321057 item 6.) This book lists persons in the Revolutionary Public Claims records who gave aid and support (“provisions and other necessaries”) to the

revolutionary forces. Most of these patriots do not appear in other Revolutionary War sources.

## **Civil War (1861-1865)**

For an excellent discussion of West Virginia's part in the Civil War see Boyd B. Stutler, *West Virginia in the Civil War*, (Charleston, W.Va.: Educational Foundation, 1963; FHL book 975.4 M2s).

**Union.** Indexes to service and pension records of Union volunteers are available at the Family History Library and the National Archives. The library also has 261 microfilms of the *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of West Virginia*. The records are arranged alphabetically by the soldiers' names within each unit. Use the index (FHL films 881595-607) to learn which unit your ancestor served in. The pension records are available only at the National Archives, however the Family History Library has the index on microfilms.

**Confederate.** West Virginia did not organize any confederate regiments nor did they grant pensions to confederate veterans. The approximately 9,000 West Virginians who chose to fight for the Confederate States of America generally joined the confederate regiments of Virginia (see the *Virginia Research Outline*). Virginia's 22nd Infantry was composed almost entirely of soldiers from West Virginia. The 31st and 46th Infantry also had large numbers from West Virginia. Some confederate veterans may have received pensions from Virginia (records with index on 219 FHL films beginning with 1439763).

The Archives and History Library has a list of Confederate soldiers and an alphabetical card index to Confederate graves.

## **World War I (1917-1918)**

World War I draft registration cards for men age 18 to 45 may list address, birth date, birthplace, race, nationality, citizenship, and next of kin. Not all registrants served in the war. For registration cards for West Virginia, see:

United States. Selective Service System. *West Virginia, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. National Archives Microfilm Publications, M1509. Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1987-1988. (On FHL films beginning with film 1992327.)

To find an individual's draft card, it helps to know his name and residence at the time of registration. The cards are arranged alphabetically by county, within the county by draft board, and then alphabetically by surname within each draft board. Most counties had only one board; large cities had several.

## **Additional Military Records**

Various rosters of soldiers for the French and Indian War, Indian Wars, Lord Dunmore's War, Revolutionary War, Whiskey Insurrection of 1794, War of 1812, Mexican War, and the Civil War, are in Virgil A. Lewis, *The Soldiery of West Virginia*. 1911, Reprint (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978; FHL book 975.4 M2L). A separate index has been published. This book has also been reprinted (and updated through the Vietnam War) as vol. 9 of *The West Virginia Historical Encyclopedia: Supplemental Series* (see the "History" section of this outline).

## **NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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Most West Virginia courts or counties recorded naturalization proceedings in the minutes and dockets of the courts rather than keeping separate registers. Prior to 1906, any court of record could naturalize immigrants. From 1906 to 1929 the federal government regulated naturalization but allowed most state or county courts to continue naturalizing immigrants. After 1929 only federal courts handled naturalizations.

For pre-1906 naturalizations you will have to search the records of all local, state, and federal courts in the area where your ancestor lived. In West Virginia most immigrants were naturalized in the state circuit or county courts so you will want to begin your search in those courts. These records are in the possession of the clerk of the circuit court or county clerk of the county. The Family History Library has copies of most West Virginia court records to the early 1900s (see the "Court Records" section of this outline).

For naturalization records after September 1906, contact the National Archives—Mid-Atlantic Region (for the records of the U.S. district courts in West Virginia) or your local office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Some records between 1906 and 1929 are also at the office of the clerk of the circuit court in each county.

## **NEWSPAPERS**

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By 1863 nine newspapers were being published in West Virginia. The largest collections of newspapers are at the Archives and History Library and the West Virginia University Library. A guide to the collection at the West Virginia University Library is *Newspapers in the West Virginia University Library* (Morgantown, W.Va.: West Virginia University Library, 1964; not at FHL).

The Family History Library has more than 1,100 microfilms of West Virginia newspapers including the *Wheeling Register* from 1863 to 1913.

The Family History Library has the obituary portion, *Obituaries from Newspapers*, of the Tetrick collection which includes obituaries from northern West Virginia from 1929 to 1949 (FHL films 163932-49). This is listed in the Family History Library Catalog under WEST VIRGINIA, HARRISON, CLARKSBURG - OBITUARIES (see the “Genealogy” section of this outline).

The library also has a collection of obituaries from 1931 and 1932 in W. Guy. Tetrick, *Obituaries from Newspapers of Northern West Virginia*. 2 vols. (Clarksburg, W.Va.: W. G. Tetrick, 1933; FHL 975.4 V4t; film 1033974 items 2-3). This is listed in the Family History Library Catalog under WEST VIRGINIA - VITAL RECORDS.

## PERIODICALS

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A variety of genealogical material has been published in periodicals. An index to several significant periodicals and other published sources is Earl Gregg Swem, *Virginia Historical Index*, 2 vols. in 4, 1934-36, Reprint (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965; FHL book 977.5 H22s; fiche 6046961; 1965 reprint on films 485948-49).

See the *Virginia Research Outline* for a list of helpful periodicals that include pre-1863 West Virginia. Other major genealogical periodicals helpful for West Virginia are:

*The Journal of the Kanawha Valley Genealogical Society*. 1977-. Published by the Kanawha Valley Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 8555, South Charleston, WV 25303-8555. (FHL book 975.43 D25j.)

*Tri-County Researcher*. 1976-. Published by Linda Goddard Stout, P.O. Box 196, Proctor, WV 26055-0196, Telephone: 304-455-3203. (FHL book 975.41 B2t; vols. 1-11 and 13 are on fiche 6048907-18.) Covers Marshall, Tyler, and Wetzel Counties.

*Virginia Genealogist*. 1957-. Published by John Frederick Dorman, P.O. Box 4883, Washington, D.C. 20008. (FHL book 975.5 B2vg; vols. 1-12, 21-35 on films 844855 item 2-4 and 844856-7.) There are cumulative indexes for volumes 1-35.

*West Augusta Historical and Genealogical Society Newsletter*. 1944-. Published by the West Augusta Historical and Genealogical Society, 2515 10th Ave., Parkersburg, WV 26101-5829. (FHL book 975.422 D25t.)

*West Virginia History: A Quarterly Magazine*. 1939-. Published by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, West Virginia, 25305-0300. (FHL book 975.4 B2wh.)

## PROBATE RECORDS

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Probate records of West Virginia have been kept by the county courts. You can obtain copies of the complete probate packets by contacting the county clerk's office in the

appropriate courthouse. Some probate matters have been recorded in deed books and court order books.

The Family History Library has copies of many calendars of wills, order books, witness books, bonds, fee books, inventories, appraisals, and bills of sale from most counties. From Kanawha County, for example, the library has 208 microfilms of fiduciary settlements for 1871 to 1968, and 121 films of wills for 1820 to 1968.

The following publications index early wills and estate settlements:

Johnston, Ross B. *West Virginia Estate Settlements 1753-1850*. Fort Worth, Tex.: American Reference Publishers, Inc., 1969. (FHL book 975.4 S2j.) This is arranged by counties and is indexed.

Torrence, Clayton. *Virginia Wills and Administrations, 1632-1800*. 1930. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965. (FHL book 975.5 P22t; film 844943)

## TAXATION

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A set of annual land tax assessment records from 1782 to 1900 is available at the State Auditor's Office (Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305-0300). Duplicate copies are usually found at the county clerk's offices in the land books.

The Virginia State Library has the original personal property tax books for West Virginia counties from 1782 to 1863. The West Virginia Archives and History Library has tax books from 1863 to 1935. See the *Virginia Research Outline* for information on pre-1863 tax records.

The Family History Library has microfilm copies of the nineteenth century tax records of most counties.

The 1787 personal property lists have been published as a substitute for the 1790 census (see the "Census" section) in Netti Schreiner-Yantis and Florence Speakman Love, comps., *The 1787 Census of Virginia: An Accounting of the Names of Every White Male Tithable Over 21 Years*. 3 vols. (Springfield, Va.: Genealogical Books in Print, 1987; FHL book 975.5 R4sn).

As a substitute for the missing 1800 Virginia census, use the abstracts of the personal property tax lists of 1800 for the 13 counties in the area that became West Virginia. These have been published in Steven A. Bridges, *Virginians in 1800: Counties of West Virginia* (Trumbull, Conn.: Steven A. Bridges, 1987; FHL book 975.4 R4b).

## VITAL RECORDS

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### State Records of Births and Deaths

Statewide registration of births and deaths began in 1917 and was generally completed by 1925. The counties have copies of these records. Because most of the *state* copies of the records from 1917 to 1921 were destroyed in a fire, it is best to request vital records through 1921 from the county clerk (see below).

The Family History Library has microfilms of birth certificates 1852-1930 (FHL films beginning with 1992300), death certificates 1917-1994, and death indexes 1917-1991 (FHL films beginning with film 1984577). You can also obtain state copies of birth and death records from 1917 to the present for a fee by writing to:

Vital Registration Office,  
State Capitol Complex No. 3, Rm 516  
Charleston, WV 25305  
Telephone: 304-558-2931  
Fax: 304-558-1051

The current fees for obtaining copies of the state's records are listed in *Where to Write for Vital Records: Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Divorces* (Hyattsville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 1993; FHL book 973 V24wv.) Copies of this booklet are at the Family History Library and many Family History Centers.

### County Records of Births and Deaths

County birth and death records date from 1853 to the present for most counties. Copies may be obtained from the county clerk. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of all available birth and death records from 1853 to about 1900, and to about 1970 for many counties.

The birth, marriage, and death records from 1853 to 1860 are on 10 microfilms (FHL film 034484-93) arranged by county and listed in the Family History Library Catalog under WEST VIRGINIA - VITAL RECORDS. Later records are listed under WEST VIRGINIA, [COUNTY] - VITAL RECORDS.

### Marriage Records

West Virginia marriages were recorded by the existing counties as early as 1780. For later counties, marriage records began when each county was organized. Marriage records can be obtained by writing to the county clerk of the county where the marriage took place.

For marriage records from 1853 to 1860 see the 10 microfilms described above under birth and death records.

The Family History Library has copies of all available marriage records from 1780 to about 1900 and to about 1970 for some counties.

The state has copies of the county records since 1964 and an index for 1921-1963. Records prior to 1964 are kept at the County Clerk's office where they applied to be married. You may obtain copies from 1964 to the present by writing to the Division of Vital Statistics (address given above).

## Divorces

Divorce proceedings are kept by the clerk of the circuit court in the county where the divorce was granted. The Family History Library does not have any West Virginia divorce records.

## FOR FURTHER READING

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More detailed information about research and records of West Virginia is found in:

Ebert, Rebecca A. *Finding Your People in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and West Virginia*. Winchester, Va.: The Rebecca Co., 1984. (FHL book 975 D27e.)

Eichholz, Alice, ed. *Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*. Rev. ed. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1992. (FHL book 973 D27rb 1992; computer number 594021.) Contains bibliographies and background information on history and ethnic groups. Also contains maps and tables showing when each county was created.

Stinson, Helen S. *A Handbook for Genealogical Research in West Virginia*. South Charleston, W.Va.: Kanawha Valley Genealogical Society, 1981. (FHL book 975.4 D27s.)

## COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

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The Family History Library welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this outline. Please send your suggestions to:

Publications Coordination  
Family History Library  
35 N. West Temple  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400  
USA

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# FAMILYSEARCH™

## G U I D E

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## West Virginia Historical Background

### History

Effective family research requires some understanding of the historical events that may have affected your family and the records about them. Learning about wars, governments, laws, migrations, and religious trends may help you understand political boundaries, family movements, and settlement patterns. These events may have led to the creation of records that your family was listed in, such as land and military documents.

The following important events in the history of West Virginia affected political boundaries, family movements, and record keeping.

1726	Morgan Morgan, the first white settler in West Virginia, established a home in Berkeley County, Virginia.
1738	Frederick and Augusta counties were formed from Orange County, Virginia. Frederick County included territory later in the Eastern panhandle of West Virginia and began functioning in 1743. Augusta County encompassed all the area west of the Blue Ridge mountains north of the Carolinas and began functioning in 1745.
1753	Hampshire County, Virginia was created. This was the first county whose boundaries were within present-day West Virginia.
1775	West Augusta District was established by Virginia and included all of West Virginia and western Pennsylvania. Ownership of part of this district was disputed with Pennsylvania.
1779	Virginia ceded most of the northern part of West Augusta District to Pennsylvania after Pennsylvania agreed to accept land grants that Virginia had made in the disputed region.
1784	Virginia ceded its claims north of the Ohio River to the United States but reserved a section known as the Virginia Military District for Revolutionary War bounty land.
1788	Virginia ratified the constitution and became a state.
1861-1865	In a dispute over secession, fifty western counties broke off to form the “restored government of Virginia,” which remained loyal to the Union. The state of West Virginia was admitted to the Union in 1863. During the Civil War, about 32,000 West Virginia soldiers enlisted in the Union Army, while 9,000 served the Confederacy.
1870s	Industrial expansion in West Virginia attracted Black immigrants from southern states and European immigrants from overseas.
1898	Over 300,000 men were involved in the Spanish-American War, which was fought mainly in Cuba and the Philippines.
1917–1918	More than 26 million men from the United States ages 18 through 45 registered with the Selective Service for World War I, and over 4.7 million American men and women served during the war.

1930s	The Great Depression closed many factories and mills. Many small farms were abandoned, and many families moved to cities.
1940–1945	Over 50.6 million men ages 18 to 65 registered with the Selective Service. Over 16.3 million American men and women served in the armed forces during World War II.
1950–1953	Over 5.7 million American men and women served in the Korean War.
1950s–1960s	The building of interstate highways made it easier for people to move long distances.
1964–1972	Over 8.7 million American men and women served in the Vietnam War.

Your ancestors will become more interesting to you if you also use histories to learn about the events that were of interest to them or that they may have been involved in. For example, by using a history you might learn about the events that occurred in the year your great-grandparents were married.

## Historical Sources

Sources for studying the history of West Virginia include:

*The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia*. 25 vols. Richwood, W. Va.: Jim Comstock, 1976. (FHL book 975.4 H26w; fiche 6051466-490.) This primarily includes biographical and geographical sketches from other published sources. This serves as a partial index to the *Supplemental Series*.

*The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia: Supplemental Series*. 25 vols. Richwood, W. Va.: Jim Comstock, 1974. (FHL book 975.4 H26wa; vols. 12-13 on film 1321160 item 9; vols. 1-25 on fiche 6051350.) This contains reprints of several articles and books related to West Virginia history and people.

Rice, Otis K. *West Virginia: A History*. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1985. (FHL book 975.4 H2ric.)

You may find state or local histories in the Family History Catalog under West Virginia or the county or the town. For descriptions of records available through Family History Centers or the Family History Library, click on Family History Library Catalog in the window to the left. The descriptions give book or film numbers, which you need to find or to order the records.

## Local Histories

Some of the most valuable sources for family history research are local histories. Published histories of towns, counties, and states usually contain accounts of families. They describe the settlement of the area and the founding of churches, schools, and businesses. You can also find lists of pioneers, soldiers, and civil officials. Even if your ancestor is not listed, information on other relatives may be included that will provide important clues for locating your ancestor. A local history may also suggest other records to search.

Most county and town histories include separate sections or volumes containing biographical information. These may include information on 50 percent or more of the families in the locality.

In addition, local histories should be studied and enjoyed for the background information they can provide about your family's lifestyle and the community and environment in which your family lived.

About 5,000 county histories have been published for over 80 percent of the counties in the United States. For many counties there is more than one history. In addition, tens of thousands of histories have been written about local towns and communities. Bibliographies that list these histories are available for nearly every state.

For descriptions of bibliographies for West Virginia available through Family History Centers or the Family History Library, click on Family History Library Catalog in the window to the left. Look under BIBLIOGRAPHY or HISTORY - BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Helpful bibliographies of West Virginia local histories are:

Forbes, Harold M. *West Virginia History: A Bibliography & Guide to Research*. Morgantown, W. Va.; West Virginia University Press, 1981. (FHL book 975.4 H2f.)

Daughters of the American Revolution, West Virginia. *Bibliography of Local History and Genealogy*. N.p.: 1965. (FHL film 940922.) This is a helpful index to books and articles on West Virginia families.

To determine county boundary changes, see *West Virginia County Formations and Boundary Changes* (Charleston, W.Va.: Historical Records Survey, 1939; FHL book 975.4 E2h). Another helpful source is Sims, *Making a State: Formation of West Virginia* (described in the "Land and Property" section of the *West Virginia Research Outline*).

Local histories are extensively collected by the Family History Library, public and university libraries, and state and local historical societies. Two useful guides are:

Filby, P. William. *A Bibliography of American County Histories*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1985. (FHL book 973 H23bi; computer number 378947.)

Kaminkow, Marion J. *United States Local Histories in the Library of Congress*. 5 vols. Baltimore: Magna Charta Book, 1975-76. (FHL book 973 A3ka; computer number 263102.)

## United States History

The following are only a few of the many sources that are available at most large libraries:

Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. *The Almanac of American History*. Greenwich, Conn.: Bison Books, 1983. (FHL book 973 H2alm; computer number 448235.) This provides brief historical essays and chronological descriptions of thousands of key events in United States history.

*Webster's Guide to American History: A Chronological, Geographical, and Biographical Survey and Compendium*. Springfield, Mass.: G&C Merriam, 1971. (FHL book 973 H2v; computer number 270091.) This includes a history, some maps, tables, and other historical information.

*Dictionary of American History*, Revised ed., 8 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976. (FHL book 973 H2ad; computer number 218842.) This includes historical sketches on various topics in U.S. history, such as wars, people, laws, and organizations.



# FAMILYSEARCH™

## G U I D E

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## West Virginia Statewide Indexes and Collections

### Guide

#### Introduction

In the United States, information about your ancestors is often found in town and county records. If you know which state but not the town or county your ancestor lived in, check the following statewide indexes to find the town or county. Then search records for that town or county.

The indexes and collections listed below index various sources of information, such as histories, vital records, biographies, tax lists, immigration records, etc. You may find additional information about your ancestor other than the town or county of residence. The listings may contain:

- The author and title of the source.
- The Family History Library (FHL) book, film, fiche, or compact disc number. If the words *beginning with* appear before the film number, check the Family History Library Catalog for additional films.
- The name of the repository where the source can be found if the source is not available at the Family History Library.

#### What You Are Looking For

- Your ancestor's name in an index or collection.
- Where the ancestor was living.

#### Steps

These 2 steps will help you find information about your ancestor in statewide indexes or collections.

#### Step 1. Find your ancestor's name in statewide indexes or collections.

On the list below, if your ancestor lived during the time period shown on the left, he or she may be listed in the source on the right.

1580–1900s	<i>Ancestral File</i> <i>International Genealogical Index</i> <i>Family History Library Catalog - Surname Search</i>
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- 1700–1960 Wardell, Patrick G. *Timesaving Aid to Virginia-West Virginia Ancestors: A Quick-and-Easy Guide to Birth, Marriage, and Death Information in Publications Concerning County History, Churches, and The Families of Residents of Virginia and West Virginia.* (FHL book 975 D22w, vols. 1–4.) Indexes about 400 local and family history books. See the authors Stewart, Brown, and Swem, on the Virginia statewide indexes and collections list for other important indexes.
- 1700–1964 Comstock, Jim. *The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia.* (FHL book 975.4 H26w, vols. 1–25; fiche 6051466–490.) The volumes are alphabetical. This set also indexes names in Hardesty's 8 volumes below.
- 1700–1883 *Hardesty's West Virginia Counties.* (FHL book 975.4 H2ha; films 908974 items 1–7; vols. 1–7; 908975, vol. 8.) See individual county listings for the film numbers. See Cochran, Wes. *Index to Hardesty's Atlases of West Virginia;* (FHL book 975.4 H2ha index; fiche 6048328.) These vols. are also indexed in *The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia* mentioned above.
- 1700–1850 Johnston, Ross B. *West Virginia Estate Settlements: An Index to Wills, Inventories, Appraisement, Land Grants, and Surveys to 1850.* (FHL book 975.4 S2j 1977.) Excerpts from *West Virginia History*, vols. 17–24, 1955–1963.
- 1700–1900s West Virginia University, Colson Reserve Library. *Personal Name Index.* (Not at the Family History Library.) This is an alphabetical card file with over 60,000 cards to names in local histories.
- 1700–1940 Tetrick, Willis Guy. *Family Record of Harrison County, and Descendants in the United States.* (FHL films 163723–838.) Alphabetical.
- 1700–1940 Tetrick, Willis Guy. *Family Sheets, an Uncompleted survey For a "Genealogical History of Harrison County, West Virginia.* (FHL films 163848–896.) Alphabetical.
- 1700–1975 Hansrote, Hazel Groves. *Genealogical Records of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, 18th Century to 1975.* (FHL films 984210–217.) Alphabetical.
- 1700–1976 Smith, Aubrey O. *Smith-Rife Collection of New River Genealogy and Local History.* (FHL films 1036968–977.) Alphabetical. For Southeastern West Virginia counties.
- 1700–1952 West Virginia University Library. *Genealogies.* (FHL films 239244–253.) Alphabetical; handwritten manuscripts filmed in 1961.
- 1700–1800 Chalkley, Lyman. *Chronicles of the Scots-Irish Settlement in Virginia: Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1754–1800.* (FHL book 975.5916 F2c 1989; films 162043–044.) Augusta County covered a large part of what is now West Virginia.
- 1700–1814 Zinn, Melba Pender. *Monongalia County, (West) Virginia, Records of the District, Superior and County Courts.* (FHL book 975.452 P28z, vols. 1–6.) Monongalia County covered several counties in the northern part of West Virginia.
- 1700–1870 Brock, R. A. (Robert Alonzo). *Virginian and Virginians: Eminent Virginians, Executives of the Colony of Virginia From Sir Thomas Smyth to Lord Dunmore. Executives of the State of Virginia From Patrick Henry to Fitzhugh Lee. Sketches of Gens. Ambrose Powell Hill, Robert E. Lee, Thos. Jonathan Jackson, Commodore Maury; History of Virginia, From Settlement of Jamestown to Close of the Civil War.* (FHL film 897042 items 2–3.) Has biographical and historical information. An index is on fiche 6048346–347.

- 1700–1880 Dumont, William H. *A Short Census of Virginia, 1779*. (FHL book 975.5 X2p 1779; film 908198 item 6.) Compiled from lists of persons who turned in bank notes; some lived in what is now West Virginia.
- 1700–1787 Schreiner-Yantis, Netti. *The 1787 Census of Virginia: An Accounting of the Names of Every White Male Tithable Over 21 Years, The Number of White Males Between 16 & 21 Years, the Number of Slaves Over 16 & Those Under 16 Years, Together With a Listing of Their Horses, Cattle, & Carriages, and Also the Names of All Persons to Whom Ordinary Licences and Physician's Licences Were Issued*. (FHL book 975.5 R4sn.)
- 1700–1880 Bridges, Steven A. *Virginians in 1800, Counties of West Virginia*. (FHL book 975.4 R4b.) This was compiled from personal property tax lists of 1800, and some from 1799 and 1801, and is a substitute for the missing 1800 census.
- 1700–1880 Schreiner-Yantis, Netti. *A Supplement to the 1810 Census of Virginia: Tax Lists of the Counties for Which the Census is Missing*. (FHL book 975.5 R4s.) Includes counties now in West Virginia.
- 1700–1860 Daughters of the American Revolution. *DAR Patriot Index* [Centennial Edition]. (FHL 973 C42da 1990, 3 vols.) Lists Rev. War patriots and their spouses; about 100,000 names.
- 1700–1850 Johnston, Ross B. *West Virginians in the American Revolution*. (FHL book 975.4 M2j; fiche 6087736.) Has excerpts from *West Virginia History*; vols. 1–9, 1939–1947.
- 1700–1850 Reddy, Anne Waller. *West Virginia Revolutionary Ancestors*. (FHL book 975.4 N2r; film 1321057 item 6.) Lists persons who gave assistance such as food, wagons etc., to the revolutionary forces.
- 1700–1847 Lewis, Virgil A. *The Soldierly of West Virginia: In the French and Indian War, Lord Dunmore's War, The Revolution, The Later Indian Wars. The Whiskey Insurrection, The Second War With England, The War With Mexico, and Addenda Relating to West Virginia in the Civil War*. (FHL book 975.4 M2L.) A separate index is found in Jeanne Robey Felldin's book *Index to the Soldierly of West Virginia* (FHL book 975.4 M2L index).
- 1700–1860 White, Virgil D. *Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files*. (FHL book 973 M28g vol. 1–4.) Lists soldiers and often spouse and children. Source is for entire U.S. About 431,700 names.
- 1700–1783 White, Virgil D. *Index to Revolutionary War Service Records*. (FHL book 973 M22wv, 4 vols.) Lists nearly all the soldiers in the U. S. who served in the Revolutionary War. Prepared from United States Adjutant General's Office. *General Index to Compiled Military Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers, Sailors*. (FHL films 882841–898.)
- 1700–1868 *D.A.R. Revolutionary War Burial Index*. (FHL films 1307675–82.) Alphabetical; prepared by Brigham Young Univ. from DAR records; often lists name, birth date, death date, burial place, name of cemetery, company or regt.; sometimes gives the place of birth, etc. About 67,000 names.
- 1700–1868 Hatcher, Patricia Law. *Abstract of Graves of Revolutionary Patriots*. (FHL book 973 V38h vols. 1–4.) For entire U.S. About 67,200 names.
- 1700–1860 Brakebill, Clovis. *Revolutionary War Graves Register*. (FHL book 973 V3br.) For entire U.S. About 53,760 names.

- 1700–1957 Sons of the American Revolution. West Virginia Society. *Applications: 1927–1957*. (FHL films beginning with 163706 item 2; index is on film 163706 item 2.)
- 1700–1981 Daughters of the American Revolution. West Virginia. Captain James Allen Chapter. *West Virginia Daughters and Their Revolutionary Patriot Ancestors* (FHL book 975.4 A1 #62.)
- 1700–1835 *The Pension Roll of 1835*. (FHL book 973 M24ua 1992 vols. 1–4; index in vol. 4.) Lists of Revolutionary War soldiers gives name, rank, unit, county of residence, when placed on roll of 1789–1834, date pension commenced, often gives age, sometimes gives date of death. About 2,000 Virginians are listed.
- 1700–1840 *A General Index to a Census of Pensioners For Revolutionary or Military Service, 1840*. (FHL book 973 X2pc index; film 899835 items 1–2; fiche 6046771.) Lists Revolutionary War pensioners whose names are on the 1840 census lists.
- After using the general index, go to the original book (FHL book Ref 973 X2pc 1967; film 899835 item 3). This book gives the pensioner's town of residence, the name of the head of household where he was living, and age of pensioner or his widow.
- 1700–1861 Sims, Edgar Barr. *Sims Index to Land Grants in West Virginia*. (FHL book 975.4 R21w; film 1036828, items 3–4.) Grantees are listed alphabetically within the county that issued the grant. Has land records, 1748–1861.
- 1700–1791 Brookes-Smith, Joan E. *Master Index, Virginia Surveys and Grants 1774–1791*. (FHL book 976.9 R22b; film 1320833, item 6).
- 1700–1970 Kirkham, E. Kay. *An Index to Some of the Family Records of the Southern States*. (FHL book 973 D22kk, vol. 1; fiche 6089183.) Indexes about forty-four films of West Virginia DAR records, filmed in 1970. The three sources listed below are indexed in Kirkham's book.
- 1700–1970 Daughters of the American Revolution ( West Virginia). *Your Ancestors and Mine, West Virginia Bible Records*. (FHL film 858651, item 1) (See above).
- 1700–1970 Daughters of the American Revolution. (West Virginia). *West Virginia Bible Records, 1700–1900*. (FHL film 848621 items 1–4.) Indexed in Kirkham's book above.
- 1700–1900 *Report, 1940, Cemetery and Family Records, 1754–1900, West Virginia*. (FHL film 848632 item 5.) This is a DAR report; see Kirkham's book above for index.
- 1700–1912 Butcher, Bernard Lee. *Genealogical and Personal History of the Upper Monongahela Valley, West Virginia*. (FHL book 975.4 D2b; film 1000647.) Includes Barbour, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur Counties.
- 1700–1905 *Genealogies of West Virginia Families: From The West Virginia Historical Magazine Quarterly, 1901–1905*. (FHL book 975.4 D2.)
- 1700–1913 Miller, Thomas Condit. *West Virginia and Its People*. (FHL book 975.4 H2mw, vols. 1–3; film 1000646.)
- 1700–1971 Hatcher, Charles Silas. *Historical Genealogy of the Basham, Ellison, Hatcher, Lilly, Meadows, Pack, Walker, and other Families [of West Virginia]*. (FHL film 1017648 item 23.)
- 1700–1890 Johnston, David E. *A History of the Middle New River Settlements and Contiguous Territory*. (FHL book 975.47 H2j; film 1000636 item 4.)

- 1700–1800s Johnson, Patricia Givens. *The New River Early Settlement*. (FHL book 975.47 H2jo.) For the Southeastern counties.
- 1700–1800s Peterkin, George W. *A History and Record of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of West Virginia: And Before the Formation of the Diocese in 1878, in the Territory Now Known as the State of West Virginia*. (FHL book 975.4 K2p.)
- 1700–1900 Hess, James W. *Guide to Manuscripts and Archives in the West Virginia Collection*. (FHL book 975.4 A5h.) Has a name index to manuscripts at the West Virginia University Library.
- 1700–1883 Comstock, Jim, ed. *The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia: Supplemental Series*. (FHL book 975.4 H26wa, vols. 1–25; film 1321160 item 9; fiche 6051350.) This contains much historical information; the book *West Virginia Women* is vol. 25 in this series.
- 1700–1840 *Elisha B. Iams Collection*. (Not at Family History Library.) This is at Citizens Library and has probate abstracts for Brooke, Monongalia, and Ohio Counties.
- 1700–present *The Journal of the Kanawha Valley Genealogical Society*. (FHL book 975.43 D25j.) Has lists of the surnames being searched and the names of the researchers.
- 1720–1870 Scott, Carol A. *Marriage and Death Notices of Wheeling, Western Virginia and the Tri-State Area*. (FHL book 975.4 V28s, vol. 1–3.) For years 1818–1870.
- 1727–1889 *History of the Great Kanawha Valley: with Family History and Biographical Sketches; A Statement of Its Natural Resources, Industrial Growth and Commercial Advantages*. (FHL film 1000648 items 1–2.)
- 1728–1930 Hale, John Peter. *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers: Historical Sketches of the First White Settlers West of the Alleghenies, 1748 and after, Wonderful Experiences of Hardships and Heroism of Those Who First Braved the Dangers of the Inhospitable Wilderness, and the Savage Tribes That Then Inhabited It*. (FHL book 975.4 H2h 1931; fiche 6048084.)
- 1730–1830 Rice, Otis K. *The Allegheny Frontier, West Virginia Beginnings, 1730–1830*. (FHL book 975.4 H2r.)
- 1730–1830 Rice, Otis K. *West Virginia: The State and Its People*. (FHL book 975.4 H2ri.)
- 1730–1830 Rice, Otis K. *West Virginia; a History*. (FHL book 975.4 H2ric.)
- 1738–1908 Cartmell, T. K. *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederick Co., Virginia, From Its Formation in 1738 to 1908, Compiled Mainly From Original Records of Old Frederic County, Now Hampshire, Berkeley, Shenandoah, Jefferson, Hardy, Clarke, Warren, Morgan and Frederick*. (FHL book 975.59 H2c 1963; film 1000634 item 1.) From original records of old Frederick Co., now Hampshire Co., Berkeley, Shenandoah, Jefferson, Hardy, Clarke, Warren, Morgan, and Frederick Counties.
- 1740–1900 White, Virgil D. *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files*. (FHL book 973 M22i, vols. 1–3.) The spouse is often listed.



- 1740–1850 De Hass, Wills. *History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of Western Virginia: Embracing an Account of the Various Expeditions in the West, Previous to 1795: Also Biographical Sketches of Col. Ebenezer Zane, Major Samuel M'Collock, Lewis Wetzel, Genl. Andrew Lewis, Genl. Daniel Brodhead, . . . and Other Distinguished Actors in Our Border Wars.* (FHL book 975.4 H2d; film 1033530, item 5.) There is a separate index by Vicki B. Horton, *Index to Wills De Hass' History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of West Virginia* (FHL 975.4 H2d index.) (Click here for Online Version)
- 1740–1930 Leahy, Ethel Carter. *Who's Who on the Ohio River and Its Tributaries: The Ohio River from the Ice Age to the Future; History, Biography, Statistics.* (FHL film 934873 item 1.) Has biographies at end of book.
- 1740–1894 *The Governors of West Virginia.* (FHL book 975.4 A1 #1; film 962706 item 2.)
- 1750–1920 **Census indexes, 1810–1860 (as part of Virginia), 1870–1880 and 1900–1920.** In the window to the left, click on **Family History Library Catalog**. Then select CENSUS or CENSUS - INDEXES from the topics that are listed.
- 1750–1940 Tetrick, Willis Guy. *Obituaries from Newspapers of Northern West Virginia: Principally From the Counties of Barbour, Braxton, Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Ritchie, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Webster, and Parts of Marion, Wetzel, and Wirt.* [1931–1932]. (FHL book 975.4 V3t, vols. 1–2; film 1033974 items 2–3.)
- 1750–1950s Lambert, Frederick B. *History and Genealogy Notebooks Concerning Cabell, Wayne, and Lincoln Counties, and The Guyandotte Valley Area.* (On 46 FHL films beginning with 205264 item 1.) Newspaper clippings, genealogical notes, Bible records, etc.)
- 1768–1795 McWhorter, Lucullus Virgil. *The Border Settlers of Northwestern Virginia from 1768–1795: Embracing the Life of Jesse Hughes and other Noted Scouts . . .* (FHL book 975.4 H2m; fiche 6046617, 6 fiche) There is an index by Helen A. Bumgardner on film 1698016 item 4.
- 1772–1890 Atkinson, George Westley. *Prominent Men of West Virginia: Biographical Sketches, Including Politics, The Law, Theology, Medicine, Education, Finance, Journalism, Trade, Commerce and Agriculture; A Compendium of Returns of Every Election, National, State, and Congressional; A Record of Every State Officer; Executive, Legislative and Judicial.* (FHL film 1000648 item 3; film 873932.)
- 1780–1860 Jackson, Ronald Vern. *Mortality Schedule, West Virginia 1860.* (FHL book 975.4 X22m 1860.)
- 1790–1870 Jackson, Ronald Vern. *Mortality Schedule, West Virginia 1870.* (FHL book 975.4 X22m 1870.)
- 1790–1903 *Men of West Virginia.* (FHL book 975.4 D3, vols. 1–2; film 874390 items 1–2.)
- 1790–1913 Scott, Carol A. *Marriages and Death Notices of Wheeling, West Virginia and the Tri-State Area.* (FHL book 975.4 V28s.)
- 1797–1949 Grant, Orena V. *Orena V. Grant Genealogical Collection: Marriage and Cemetery Records, From Southeastern, North, and South Central States.* (FHL book 973 V2g; film 823747, item 1; 962278 item 1.)
- 1800–1865 United States Adjutant General's Office. *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of West Virginia.* (FHL films 881595–607.) Union soldiers; indexes the records below.

- 1800–1865 United States Record and Pension Office. *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of West Virginia*. (On 261 FHL films beginning with 1478231.) See item above for index. These records are by unit, then alphabetical.
- 1800–1934 United States. Veterans Administration. *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934*. (On 544 FHL films beginning with 540757.) This is a card index that lists many Civil War soldiers, and may give the first name of the spouse; you can send for the pension application papers from the National Archives.
- 1800–1890 Lang, Theodore F. *Loyal West Virginians from 1861–1865: With an Introductory Chapter on the Status of Virginia For thirty Years Prior to the War*. (FHL film 928294 item 4.) West Virginians in the Civil War.
- 1800–1890 Dilts, Bryan Lee. *1890 West Virginia Census Index of Civil War Veterans or Their Widows*. (FHL book 975.4 X22d 1890.) Lists Union and Confederate veterans or their widows.
- 1800–1865 United States. Adjutant General's Office. *Consolidated Index to Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers*. (FHL films beginning with 821594.) National Archives publication M253. Search this index for Confederate soldiers and the index below.
- 1800–1865 Virginia. Office of the Secretary of Virginia Military Records. *Index to State Confederate Service Records of Virginia; Confederate Service Records of Virginia, 1861–1865*. (FHL films 29777–808.) Not complete. Search the index above also.
- 1850–present West Virginia Division of Vital Statistics. *West Virginia Marriage Index, 1921–1963*. (Not at the Family History Library.)
- 1853–1860 *Vital Statistics, 1853–1860 of West Virginia*. (FHL films 34484–93.) Arranged by county.
- 1873–1918 Haulsee, W. M. *Soldiers of the Great War*. (FHL book 973 M23s vols. 1–3; fiche 6051244.) Soldiers who died in World War I; vol. 3 has West Virginia.
- 1873–1918 United States Selective Service System. *West Virginia, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918*. (On 60 reels beginning with FHL film 1992327.) Men ages 18 to 45 are listed alphabetically by county or draft board.

For ideas on ways your ancestor's name might be spelled by indexers or in collections, see Name Variations.

## Step 2. Copy and document the information.

The best method of copying information is to:

- Make a photocopy of the page(s) that include your ancestor's name.
- Document where the information came from by writing the title, call number, and page number of the index or collection on the photocopy. Also write the name of the library or archive.

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## Where to Find It

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### Family History Centers and the Family History Library

You can use the Family History Library book collection only at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, but many of our books have been microfilmed. Most of our films can be requested and used at our Family History Centers. To locate the address for the nearest Family History Center, [click here](#).

For information about contacting or visiting the library or a center, see [Family History Library and Family History Centers](#).

### Libraries and Archives

You may be able to find the books at public or college libraries. If these libraries do not have a copy of the book you need, you may be able to order it from another library on interlibrary loan.

To use interlibrary loan:

- Go to a public or college library.
- Ask a librarian to order a book or microfilm for you through interlibrary loan from another library. You will need the title of the item and the name of the author.
- The library staff will direct you in their procedures. Sometimes this is free; sometimes there is a small fee.

You can find addresses and phone numbers for most libraries and archives in the *American Library Directory*, published by the American Library Association. [The American Library Directory](#) is available at most public and college libraries.

# Maps

## Computer Resources

### **MapQuest Maps**

Summary: Must know address, city, state, and zip code; more recent maps

### **Animap**

BYU FHL – on computer

Summary: Has each state with maps. Shows county boundary changes and allows marking of cities and finds distances.

### **Google Maps**

Summary: Has address finder, allows keyword searching, and allows street, satellite, or terrain views

### **Geology.com Maps**

Summary: Has Relief, Elevation, Drainage, Political and Road Maps for each state.

### **West Virginia County Maps**

**Summary: West Virginia County Formation Maps**

## West Virginia Maps Bibliography

Andriot, Jay. *Township Atlas of the U.S.* McLean, Virginia, 1991.  
*Mic/Gen Ref- G 1201.F7 AS 1991*

Summary: Shows "minor county subdivisions" maps start after 1930 and are provided by the Bureau of the Census. Census county subdivisions or minor civil divisions. Does not include Hawaii or Alaska.

Evaluation of West Virginia Maps: pp. 1085-1099. General history of counties with precincts, census county divisions, public land surveys and townships.

Jackson, Richard H. *Historical & Genealogical Atlas of the U.S.: East of the Mississippi. vol.1.* 1970.

*Mic/Gen Ref- G 1201 .E622S J33x 1970z* (Part of Virginia also)

Summary: Gives a chronological list of the counties.

Evaluation of West Virginia Maps: Chronological list of Counties p. 185. 1960 P187; 1860 pp 188-189; 1838 p190; 1823 P 191; 1804 P 192; Revolutionary Period p 193.

Kirkham, E. Kay. *A Genealogical and Historical Atlas of the United States.* Utah: Everton Publishers, Inc. 1976.

*Mic/Gen Ref- G1201.E622S.KS 1976.*

Summary: Shows changes in boundaries in the United States from colonial days up to 1909. Civil War maps and information.

Evaluation of West Virginia Maps: State historical information, p 50. Maps: 1790-1900, 65; 1909,248; See Virginia before 1861.

Mattson, Mark T. *Macmillan Color atlas of the States.* Toronto: Simon Schuster Macmillan, 1996.

*Mic/ Gen Ref- Quarto Shelves G 1200.M4 1996*

Summary: General state information.

Evaluation of West Virginia Maps: pp.336-342. General state information includes; Maps with highways, climate & environment, history & important events, population & government, ethnicity & education, economy & resources.

Thorndale, William and William Dollarhide. *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1947.* Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987.

*Mic/Gen Ref- G1201.F7 TS 1987*

Summary: Outlines counties and changes in 10 year intervals. Gives brief history on census, its growth and accuracy. Sources for maps come from state/territorial laws.

Evaluation of West Virginia Maps: pp.367-376. Shows modern boundaries and changes.

Map Collection on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the old section of HBLL

Clark, David Sands. *Index to Maps of the American Revolution Books and Periodicals: Illustrating the Revolutionary War and other events of the Period, 1763 - 1789*, Connecticut Greenwood Press, 1974.

Map Collection – G 1201 .S3 C53x 1974

Summary: Excellent index – separated by geographic area and then state and town. Also separated by date, military operations, types of Indian boundary lines and Indian tribal lands.

Evaluation: Excellent to find other maps in specific areas. Lists forts and many other hard to find maps.

Stephenson, Richard W. *The Cartography of Northern Virginia Facsimile Reproductions of Maps Dating from 1608 to 1915*, Virginia, 1981.

Map Collection Quarto – G 1290 .S7 1981

Summary: Brief history of the maps and who made them (i.e. John Smith's map of Virginia 1608).

Evaluation: Fascinating maps and grid layouts with brief histories and towns, cities etc.

Symonds, Craig L. *A Battlefield Atlas of the American Revolution*, The Nautical & Aviating Publishing Company of America, Inc. 1986.

Map Collection – G 1201 .S3 S96x 1986

Summary: Early American campaigns and gives suggestions for further reading.

Evaluation: Excellent to see where battles were held, their routes there. Battle lines and forts involved with dates of specific battles, with the generals in charge and chronology of what happened in each listed battle.

Map Collection - Map Cases G3890-G3894. Individual maps that illustrate things from military movement to censuses. Map Folio Cases GI295-1299. SEE VIRGINIA

Web Sites/Computer Programs

[www.topozone.com](http://www.topozone.com)

Summary: Gives options, of place name searches, coordinate searches, UTM searches.

Evaluation: Excellent for finding what new town your old town (etc) may be in.

[www.MapQuest.com](http://www.MapQuest.com)

Summary: Must know address, city, state and zip code, more recent maps.

Evaluation: Good, to find an existing relative if you have their address.

**Animap**

Mic/Gen Family Search room - on computer and *CD*. version available

Summary: Each state is different, with maps. Shows boundary changes with now boundaries.

Evaluation: Excellent to find older maps quick.

## West Virginia Maps Bibliography

(many more available on HBLI Online Catalog)

*A New Map of Virginia*, Philadelphia (1853)

Map collection: **G 3880 1853 .C6**

Summary: a small map, separated by counties, and in color. Gives an index to steamboat routes and some major cities and railroad stops. Gives a profile of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

Evaluation: in fair condition (small part of map missing at seam)

*Johnson's Virginia, Delaware, Maryland & West Virginia*, New York (1864)

Map Collection: **G 3880 1864 .J6**

Summary: counties separated into four different colors, pictures given of the University of Virginia, Fortress Monroe, General Post Office, Treasury Building, and Patent Office. Index on back of map is barely legible.

Evaluation: fair condition, repairs done prevents the reading of the index.

*New Railroad, County, Township and District map of West Virginia: and the adjacent counties of the adjoining states*, Chicago, IL (1883)

Map Collection: **G 3890 1883 .R3**

Summary: Large map, counties outlined in color. Not indexed. Includes "Map showing the U.S. Congressional Districts of West Virginia, 1882" and "Map showing the State Senatorial districts of West Virginia, 1882". Also Includes a table of "Presidential vote-1880" and the Congressional and Senatorial districts.

Evaluation: Good condition

*Indexed Atlas of the World [West Virginia]*, Chicago, IL (1888)

Map collection: **G 3890 1888 .R3**



Summary: Separated by counties. Color map. Indexed by counties, creeks, mountains, rivers, and towns.

Evaluation: Good condition. Easy to read. Convenient indexing.

*A Map of West Virginia, Morgantown (1899)*

Map Collection: **G 3891 .H5 1899 .M6**

Summary: Not in color. Shows mountain ranges, mine and mineral resources. Also shows oil pools, natural gas, and coal areas.

Evaluation: Map is permanently folded in half. Good condition.

*The Rand McNally New Commercial Atlas Map of West Virginia, Chicago, IL (1915)*

Map Collection: **G 3890 1916 .R3**

Summary: counties are separated by color. Includes railroad information. Indexed by counties, creeks, mountains, rivers, and towns.

Evaluation: good condition, easy to read.

*The Rand McNally New Commercial Atlas Map of West Virginia, Chicago, IL (1915)*

Map Collection: **G 3890 1915 .R3**

Summary: counties are separated by color. Includes railroad information. Indexed by counties, creeks, mountains, rivers, and towns.

Evaluation: good condition, easy to read.





## Tips

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### Tip 1. How can the census help me find my ancestor's parents?

Searching the census taken closest to the time the ancestor married has the best possibility of finding your ancestor and spouse living close to their parents and other family members.

### Tip 2. How can I understand the information better?

Sometimes knowing why the census taker asked a question can help you understand the answer. Detailed instructions given to census takers are in the book, *Twenty Censuses: Population and Housing Questions 1790-1980*, updated as *200 Years of U.S. Census Taking*, both by the United States Census Bureau.

### Tip 3. How can comparing information in more than one census help me?

Comparing censuses indicates:

- Changes in who was in the household, such as children leaving home or the death of grandparents or a child.
- Changes in neighbors. Remember, neighbors might be relatives or in-laws.
- Changes about each individual, such as age.
- Movement of the family within West Virginia to a different county or town.
- Movement of the family out of West Virginia if the family no longer appears in the census for West Virginia.

You will eventually want to know every country, state, county, township, and town where your ancestor was located. You can then check information in other records for those places. A careful check of all available federal census records can help you identify those places.

The age and estimated birth date of an individual may vary greatly from census to census. Often ages are listed more accurately for young children than for adults.

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## Background

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### Description

A census is a count and a description of the population of a country, colony, territory, state, county, or city. Census records are also called census schedules or population schedules. Early censuses are basically head counts. Later censuses give information about marriage, immigration, and literacy. United States censuses are useful because they begin early and cover a large portion of the population.

### What U.S. Federal Censuses Are Available

Censuses have been taken by the United States government every 10 years since 1790. The 1920 census is the most recent federal census available to the public; the 1930 census will be released in 2002.

The West Virginia 1890 census was destroyed by fire. However, portions of a special schedule taken in 1890 of Union Civil War veterans and their widows have survived. The surviving 1890 veterans' schedules cover Washington D.C., half of Kentucky, and all of Louisiana through Wyoming (states are in alphabetical order from K through W). The surviving portions of the veterans' schedules contain approximately 700,000 names.

## Types of Census Schedules

The following census schedules are available for West Virginia and were created in various years by the federal government:

- **Population schedules** list a large portion of the population; most are well-indexed and are available at many repositories.
- **Mortality schedules** list those who died in the 12 months prior to the day the census was taken for the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses. (In 1850 and 1860 the West Virginia area was included in schedules for Virginia.)
- **1840 pensioners' schedules** list people who were receiving pensions in 1840. Included were men who fought in the Revolutionary War or in the War of 1812 or their widows. West Virginians are included in the Virginia schedules.
- **1890 veterans' schedules** list Union veterans from the Civil War or their widows who were living in 1890.
- **Slave schedules** for Southern states list slave owners and the number of slaves they owned in 1850 and 1860. Persons in West Virginia are included in the Virginia schedules.
- **Agricultural schedules** list data about farms and the names of the farmers for the 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses. For 1850 and 1860, West Virginia is included in the schedules for Virginia
- **Manufacturing or industrial schedules** list data about businesses and industries for the 1810 (fragments only), 1820, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses. For 1850 and 1860, West Virginia is included in the schedules for Virginia.

## How the Censuses Were Taken

People called enumerators were hired by the United States government to take the census. The enumerators were given forms to fill out and were assigned to gather information about everyone living in a certain area or district. Enumerators could visit the houses in any order, so families who are listed together in the census may or may not have been neighbors. The accuracy of the enumerators and the readability of their handwriting varies.

After the census was taken, usually one copy was sent to the state and another to the federal government. Sometimes copies were also kept by the counties. Few of the state and county copies survived.

## When the Censuses Were Taken

Census takers were supposed to gather information about the people who were part of each household on the following dates:

1790 to 1820: First Monday in August  
1830 to 1900: 1 June (2 June in 1890)  
1910: 15 April  
1920: 1 January  
1930: 1 April

If your ancestor was born in the census year, your ancestor should be listed only if he or she was born before the census date.

If your ancestor died in the census year, your ancestor should be listed only if he or she died after the census date.

The census may have actually taken several months to complete and may reflect births and deaths after the census date.

## Censuses from 1930 to the Present

U.S. Federal Censuses from 1930 to the present are confidential. The 1930 census will be available in 2002. You may ask the U.S. Census Bureau to send information about:

- Yourself.
- Another living person, if you are that person's "authorized representative."
- Deceased individuals, if you are "their heirs or administrators."

You may request information for only one person at a time. There is a fee for each search. To request information, you must provide the person's name, address at the time of the census, and other details on Form BC-600, available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

For the address of the U.S. Census Bureau, see *Where to Find It*.

## Colonial, State, and Local Censuses

Colonial, state, and local governments also took censuses. Nonfederal censuses generally contain information similar to and sometimes more than federal censuses of the same period. In the 1730s there were British colonial settlements in the West Virginia area. There are colonial censuses and census substitutes for 1740 through 1787. See the *Virginia Census Records* guide in this system for these sources.

West Virginia became a state in 1863. In West Virginia no state censuses were taken.

Colonial, state, and local censuses may be available on the Internet, at Family History Centers, at the Family History Library, and in state and local archives and libraries.

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## Where to Find It

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### Internet

Many Internet sites include census records, census indexes, or information about censuses. You may find the following sites helpful:

- West Virginia GenWeb and USGenWeb have links to indexes and records and may have links to archives, libraries, and genealogical and historical societies.
- CensusLinks on the Net includes links to Internet sites that have United States and Canada censuses and indexes. It includes information about censuses and how to use them, a Soundex calculator, census forms you can print, an age calculator, and more.
- The Archives and Libraries section of the *West Virginia Research Outline* lists Internet addresses for several West Virginia archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of West Virginia censuses, and the Internet sites may list what records they have.

## Family History Centers

Many Family History Centers keep copies of some census microfilms. Family History Centers can borrow microfilms of a U.S. Federal Census from the Family History Library. A small fee is charged to have a microfilm sent to a center.

You may request photocopies of U.S. Federal Censuses from the Family History Library. Staff at the Family History Center can show you how to request this service.

Family History Centers are located throughout the United States and other areas of the world. See Family History Centers for the address and phone number of the center nearest you.

## Family History Library

The Family History Library has complete sets of the existing U.S. Federal Censuses from 1790 to 1920. No fee is charged for using census microfilms in person.

For a list of indexes and other census records, click on **Family History Library Catalog** in the window to the left. Select from the list of titles to see descriptions of the records with the film or book call numbers. Use that information to obtain the records at a family history center or at the Family History Library.

For information about contacting or visiting the library, see *Family History Library and Family History Centers*.

## National Archives

Copies of the existing federal censuses from 1790 to 1920 are available in the Microfilm Research Room in the National Archives Building and at the 13 Regional National Archives. The National Archives has a microfilm rental program for census records. Call 301-604-3699 for rental information. For information on how to order photocopies of census records from the National Archives, click here.

## College and Public Libraries

Many college libraries have copies of the census microfilms, particularly for their own states. Many larger public libraries have copies of the census soundex and population schedules. Smaller public libraries may be able to obtain the records through interlibrary loan.

## State Archives, Libraries, and Historical Societies

The Archives and Libraries section of the *West Virginia Research Outline* lists Internet and mailing addresses for several West Virginia archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of West Virginia censuses, and the Internet sites may list what records they have.

## U.S. Census Bureau

To request information from the 1930 census and later censuses, you must provide your relative's name, address, and other details on Form BC-600, available from:

The U.S. Census Bureau  
P.O. Box 1545  
Jeffersonville, IN 47131  
Telephone: 812-218-3300

## **Genealogical Search Services**

Many genealogical search services will search the census for a fee. These sources can help you find a genealogical search service:

- CyndisList lists many companies and individuals who do research and mentions publications about how to hire a professional genealogist.
- Advertisements in major genealogical journals may help you find a researcher.

For more information, see [Hiring a Professional Genealogist](#).



## Census problems? Maybe this is why we can't always find our ancestors...

1790 - Washington D.C. is with Montgomery & Prince George Co.'s in Maryland

1820 and 1830 - Wisconsin is with the Michigan Census

1836 - Iowa Territory Census includes Minnesota

1840 - Montana is with Clayton Co., Iowa

1860 - Colorado is with the Kansas Census

- Montana is found in the 1860 Nebraska Census under "unorganized territory," which also includes what is now NE Colorado

- Oklahoma is with Arkansas, which was then Indian land

- Wyoming is included with Nebraska

Prior to 1880 IA did NOT mean Iowa, but Indiana

Virginia once covered many thousands of square miles more than it does now. A reference made to a person having been born in Virginia could mean that the person really was born in part of:

Illinois from 1781-1818

Ohio from 1728-1803

Indiana from 1787-1816

Pennsylvania from 1752-1786

Missouri from 1775-1792

Tennessee from 1760-1803

North Carolina from 1728-1803

West Virginia from 1769-1863

(Taken from Walla Walla Gen. Soc. Blue Mt. Heritage. Vol. 16, No.4)

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