

# Appalachian Curator

Volume 3, Issue 3, Winter 2022



The *Appalachian Curator* is a publication of the  
Special Collections Committee of the  
Appalachian Studies Association

## Volume 3, Issue 3, Winter 2022

The *Appalachian Curator* is a newsletter by and about special collections and archives that collect primary and secondary materials related to the Appalachian mountains. Our intended audience is scholars, students, researchers, archivists, librarians, and anyone else with an interest in resources that document Appalachia.

The *Appalachian Curator* is a publication of the Special Collections Committee of the Appalachian Studies Association. It is a free, online newsletter published triannually (Spring/Summer, Fall, and Winter) and hosted at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

We welcome questions, comments, ideas for articles, news about Appalachian repositories, updates on new acquisitions, and anything related to Appalachian resources.

### Editorial board

Gene Hyde – Coeditor – ghyde@unca.edu

Liz Harper – Coeditor – harpere@wcu.edu

Marc Brodsky – marc9@vt.edu

Stewart Plein – Stewart.Plein@mail.wvu.edu

Ashley Whittle – amwhittle@unca.edu

Dustin Witsman

Ramsey Library

University of North Carolina Asheville

8504, 1 University Heights

Asheville, NC 28804

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Cover photo: Swinging bridge, The Little Pigeon River, Edgar Purdom (1900-1987), Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University

# Editors' Column

*Gene Hyde, Liz Harper*

I hope everyone's doing fine as 2022 wanes and winter approaches. Based on a number of conversations with you I know we've all been extremely busy this year. Here's hoping you find some time for rest and relaxation over the Winter Holidays. As my Mom was fond of saying, here's to finding time to "recharge your batteries."

We have several articles of interest in this issue. Pauletta Hansel reports on the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition's oral history program, which is up to 45 interviews and growing. Stewart Plein discusses WVU's impressive newspaper digitization project, which has been systematically digitizing West Virginia newspapers since 2011. I write about UNC Asheville receiving the Bill and Alice Hart Collection that contains over 1200 carefully curated monographs and 25+ linear feet of manuscript and ephemera about Western North Carolina, collected over 50 years by the Harts. We also have a report from the ASA Special Collections Committee's response to the flooding in Kentucky, as well Jinny Turman's powerful first-person account of assisting with the flood relief efforts at Appalshop.

Do you have an update about your repository? A new initiative to share with the Appalachian archival community? A collection you'd like to highlight? New resources to share? We would love to hear from you and help you share your stories with your colleagues. If you have a story suggestion or want to submit an article, please contact Liz Harper ([harpere@email.wcu.edu](mailto:harpere@email.wcu.edu)) or Gene Hyde ([ghyde@unca.edu](mailto:ghyde@unca.edu)).

Possible story ideas include:

- community archiving projects
- digitization projects
- histories and profiles of archival repositories
- profiles of archivists and donors
- descriptions of collections
- articles on the craft and practice of archival work
- lists of new acquisitions
- upcoming workshops or training opportunities
- upcoming or current exhibits and events
- news about grants or collaborations
- or anything else related to Appalachian archives

Thanks for reading and sharing your archival stories.

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## Post-flood cleanup at Appalshop – A First Person Account

*Jinny Turman, The University of Virginia's College at Wise*

I was in Denver, Colorado, wrapping up a vacation when I heard the news that portions of eastern Kentucky had been flooded by a series of thunderstorms. Thankfully my partner's community, Morehead, was spared, but we quickly realized that certain areas of Wise County, Virginia, where I live, were underwater, as were locations in Letcher, Hazard, and several other counties in southeastern Kentucky.

Like many people, I was shocked to see the images of flooded downtowns, homes, roadways, and hollers appear on social media. Then I saw the picture of Appalshop, its wood-clad building submerged under six feet of the North Fork of the Kentucky River. Having attended an audio/visual archival workshop at Appalshop and toured their archival warehouse in 2019, I immediately knew what this image conveyed: some of Appalachia's most precious historic resources were in imminent danger.

On Thursday, July 28, I reached out to Appalshop's archivist Caroline Rubens to offer assistance. I am not a trained archivist, but I have worked in archives and, because of previous public history projects, could offer at least a modicum of experience moving archival collections. Caroline responded the following evening saying that she had just accessed the building and that she would welcome volunteers the following day. I arrived the morning of Sunday, July 31 to see what I could do to help.

The day, for me and everyone else who volunteered there, I feel confident in saying, was shocking and sad. Witnessing the scope of devastation around Whitesburg, and then Appalshop itself, rendered me less effective a volunteer than I wish, in hindsight, I had been. The tasks for the day consisted of creating a space in Appalshop's pavilion where volunteers could place archival materials as they were brought out of the building; removing materials from the building; and relocating some of the material that did not need immediate access to cold storage, like B-roll VHS tape, to an off-site facility with dehumidifiers. I helped with the latter task but spent the bulk of my time shuffling 16mm film and other sodden, mud-caked audio/visual materials from the warehouse's truck bay to the pavilion. My biggest challenge was trying to keep the wheelbarrow upright on completely saturated ground. A young volunteer DJ at Appalshop, maybe 10 years old, provided me with good company and encouragement. His school and home had been flooded, and he said what he missed the most were Spaghetti-Os with meatballs. Sometimes it's the little things that can really get to us in a crisis of that magnitude. I must admit that I cried more than once when seeing films like "Chemical Valley" lying drenched in the bed of my wheelbarrow.

I returned a second time with my partner, Tom Kiffmeyer, a historian who consulted on Appalshop's landmark film "Stranger with a Camera." This was several days later, and Caroline had acquired refrigerated trucks to temporarily house materials that needed to be shipped off to Colorlab, a film restoration company in Maryland. In light of everyone's anxiety about seeing rare film footage secured and restored, it was gratifying to help load boxes of audio / visual materials onto a FedEx truck bound directly for Maryland. We then emptied out VHS tapes from a separate refrigerated truck and relocated them to the facility in Whitesburg for dehumidification.

I wish I could say I did more. My semester was about to begin, courses needed to be planned, and pre-semester meetings drew my attention away from Whitesburg. However, the experience has certainly made me rethink my role as a public historian in the region. Although digital copies of archival resources can never replace any originals lost to fire, flood, or the normal deterioration processes, digital copies can allow us access to those resources for the foreseeable future. This experience has renewed my commitment to working with regional organizations to digitize historic resources that may become even more vulnerable as climate change renders 100-year floods a nearly annual occurrence.

*Jinny Turman teaches Appalachian, environmental, and community/local history at UVA Wise. She is also a member of the ASA Special Collections Committee*

# ASA Special Collections Committee Response to Kentucky Flooding

*Stewart Plein, Chair, ASA Special Collections Committee*

Following the devastating flooding in Kentucky, the ASA Special Collections Committee extended assistance on a number of fronts, individually and institutionally, specifically concerning Appalshop in Whitesburg and Hindman Settlement School in Hindman. Two committee members have been engaged in weekly response phone calls coordinated by the Kentucky Arts Council with others from across Appalachia. Discussions on funding sources, volunteers, best practices and other recovery topics were an important part of this weekly discussion. Members of the committee, including a professor at UVA Wise, were on the ground assisting recovery in the early stages.

In response to this disaster the ASA Special Collections Committee gathered virtually to brainstorm and bounce around some ideas for ways and means to assist our colleagues in Kentucky. The meeting was divided into three sections: 1) Reports from the region, 2) Actions, and 3) Plans.

## **Reports:**

- Jeremy A. Smith, the director of the Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State has been instrumental in coordinating ETSU's response offering freezer storage for damaged archives. On Saturday July 30, less than two days after devastating floods came through eastern Kentucky, the Archives of Appalachia at ETSU were able to receive a small portion of the wet, flood-damaged photographs and papers from the Hindman Settlement School's archives. ETSU had available walk-in freezer space and was able to locate more. Around 15 linear feet of materials were immediately frozen, and the Archives worked with Hindman staff to plan and initiate efforts to dry and clean the materials. Archives have been bagged, boxed and frozen. ETSU has devised a plan for the papers and AV material. Frozen materials will be thawed and handled a few at a time to be dried, cleaned and stored at ETSU.
- Smith reported that books looked replaceable. Stewart Plein, curator, West Virginia and Regional History Center, West Virginia University special collections, is collecting books on Appalachia to replace those lost at Hindman. Phyllis Wilson Moore, a WVU donor of Appalachian literature, history, and writers, requested involvement. Moore has won awards for her work supporting West Virginia and Appalachian writers and has continued to donate regularly to WVU's West Virginia and Appalachian collections. Moore had been to Hindman many times over the years and wanted to find a way to help. Plans are



to go through Moore's donations, set aside duplicates, and gather those books together to donate to Hindman at a later date when they are ready to receive them. There will also be many duplicates from gifts that WVU Libraries can offer, combined with duplicates from Moore's collection, as well as duplicates from committee member libraries, this will make a great contribution towards reestablishing Hindman's book collection.

- Tim Binkley, director of special collections at Berea, noted that Appalshop reached out regarding space. There were valid concerns regarding the storage of materials that belonged to another institution. Liz Harper, Assistant Professor, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, had drafted an MOU for just such circumstances and shared it with the group following the meeting.

### **Actions:**

As Appalshop and Hindman move through the salvage stage it will take time to know exactly where help will be needed. The following list provides possible actions that can be taken until needs are clarified.

Donate funds:

- [Appalshop's website](#) lists ways to give
- [Hindman's website](#) lists ways to assist and donate with flood relief efforts

Recommended resources:

- Media Preserve, Pittsburgh, PA. Cleans and digitizes flood damaged AV materials.
- NEDCC grant funding and preservation and conservation needs

Plans:

- The Committee could write letters of support when both organizations apply for funding.
- Extra Hollinger boxes could be donated to rehouse papers.

The Special Collections committee's response will evolve as things move forward on the ground. The efforts from the Kentucky Arts Council and the Special Collections Committee is ongoing.

At a later date, Smith hopes to provide an update on conservation work and what lies ahead in the cleaning and preservation of flood damaged materials. Smith will present on these efforts at the Appalachian Studies Association Special Collections Committee panel in Athens, Ohio, 2023.



# Urban Appalachian Story Gathering Project

*Pauletta Hansel, Project Director; Urban Appalachian Community Coalition Core Member*

The Urban Appalachian Story Gathering Project is an activity of the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition, a small nonprofit which formed in 2014 when the decades old Urban Appalachian Council was disbanded. UACC traces its origin to the 1964 founding of Cincinnati’s Main Street Bible Center, which served Appalachian migrants chiefly in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. The Urban Appalachian Council was established in 1974 and provided services for forty years to urban Appalachians and their descendants throughout greater Cincinnati. Overall, we have served Cincinnati Appalachians for more than a half-century with a current focus on engagement and leadership

development, research and advocacy, and cultural programming.



*Video Quilt Welcome Page*

The Urban Appalachian Story Gathering Project was developed as both community outreach—connecting community members to each other and to the UACC— and as a method of informally capturing the experiences of greater Cincinnati’s urban Appalachian people. The model is based on NPR’s

StoryCorps Project. The intent is for individual people to collect short video interviews with family members, friends, colleagues—anyone they know with an Appalachian background. These can be recorded on smartphones or Zoom, and uploaded to a DropBox. We then post them “as is” on the UACC’s website, [here](#). They are shared to the community via our newsletter and social media posts. We have also created Video Quilts from the interviews, piecing together clips on topics such as food, identity, nature, spirituality and more. These are accessed [here](#).

Most interviews are in the range of fifteen minutes: the shorter length is both for ease of uploading and ease of viewing; longer recordings are unlikely to be seen in their entirety. Interviewers have free reign on their questions, though the few simple questions we

suggest on our website (<https://uacvoice.org/storygathering/>) tend to allow for a nice range of responses:

1. When were you born?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. What was it like growing up there
4. What were some of your favorite things to do?
5. Where are your parents' families from?
6. Have you ever been there? What was it like?
7. What have your parents or grandparents told you about what things were like there?
8. Did you or your parents use words like Appalachian or mountain people to describe yourselves? (And do you now?)
9. What else would you like to tell me?

We purposely leave the “Appalachian” question for last, as while the people we interview have a clear Appalachian lineage, many do not immediately identify as such.

There are currently 45 interviews posted on our website, reflecting the diversity of the community in factors such as race, profession, neighborhood and generation of migration. These range from teens to seniors, from migrants to those with Appalachian



*Michael Thompson interviewed by Pauletta Hansel*

grandparents, and from self-identified Appalachian researchers, activists and artists to those who have never thought about their Appalachian heritage. For example, I interviewed my hairdresser after learning that he was born and raised in Over-the-Rhine in the 1960s. He had never considered himself an Appalachian, although his family and personal history is a clear fit. Several of our family interviews have also resulted in younger generations rethinking their connection to their Appalachian background.

The Urban Appalachian Story Gathering Project is conducted on a shoestring budget (a little thicker shoestring the first year, thanks to some funding from the Ohio Humanities Council). Staffing is our existing part-time Communications Coordinator (who creates the Video Quilts as well as social media posts), a temporary part-time assistant, and my volunteer and contractual time as Project Director and interviewer. Other stories are

collected by volunteers, with an occasional contract to help capture some stories we specifically want to hear.

It is worth noting that we originally envisioned the Urban Appalachian Story Gathering Project back in Summer 2021 as a way to bring people back together after a long pandemic. Unfortunately, the pandemic had other plans, but technology allowed us to continue the gathering process remotely. And, of course, the technology that makes the project possible also has its own set of challenges. Our website includes a “What you will need to get started” section with links to sample interviews, questions and recording tips. Due to the pandemic, we conducted our “Story Gathering Project Launch” via Zoom, and have included the recording of this overview on our website. A release form signed by both parties is required, and is the only thing that we don’t make available on our website, as we want to have direct in-person, email or phone contact with interviewees before that act in UACC’s name.

Most of the interviews have been recorded via Zoom, though a few have been in-person, using smartphones as video cameras; both Zoom and smartphones are fairly ubiquitous these days, and have not been a huge barrier to participation, at least for interviewees. As things stand now, interviewees have to have some comfort with using



*Allison Douthat interviewed by Elyse Irwin*

technology, including navigating webpages, initiating a recording on Zoom, and downloading and uploading material. Our biggest challenge initially was dealing with the recording files—eventually we settled on the paid version of Dropbox for uploading, as we can accept larger files there. Dropbox also

has the advantage of being accessible to folks who don’t have their own Dropbox account. Interviewees can click a link on our website which gives direct access to the uploading process. Release forms are also most often submitted electronically, generally as a photograph of the signed form to the Dropbox or as an email attachment.

Beyond the technical issues (and, no doubt, because of them), our biggest challenge has been expanding our crew of interviewers. The majority of interviews have been conducted by a handful of close associates. It is not hard to find people willing to tell their stories, but our intent had been that those who are interviewed would go on to interview others. This has only happened once or twice. We did gather six interviews in

partnership with Miami Regional's Appalachian Studies course, which extended the reach into new parts of the community.

While the Story Gathering Project was envisioned as an outreach activity, more attention to outreach for the project itself will be necessary to develop this aspect, and we suspect that (as with Covid) "community spread" requires in-person contact. Once that can happen, there are many possibilities, including story gathering parties, additional school partnerships, and "interviewing booths" at community events. But regardless of the rate or scope of future expansion, the Urban Appalachian Story Gathering Project provides a wealth of narrative information about Cincinnati's urban Appalachian community, and is readily available to the casual viewer and researcher alike.

For more information visit <https://uacvoice.org/storygathering/> or contact the Urban Appalachian Story Project at [storyproject@uacvoice.org](mailto:storyproject@uacvoice.org).



*Pearl and Sally Hampton interviewed by Jerod Bradley*

# Digitizing West Virginia's Historic Newspapers 2011-2022

*Stewart Plein, West Virginia University*

The history of West Virginia's newspapers provides a valuable narrative of the state, from its war-torn separation from Virginia to its development as a state rich in natural resources and diverse populations. Newspapers reported the rapid growth of industry from coal mining to oil, lumber and glass. The variety of industry brought an influx of immigrant and African American populations who came to work in these burgeoning fields of commerce. Over five consecutive grant cycles, The West Virginia and Regional History Center (WVRHC), special collections for West Virginia University (WVU), has selected and digitized newspapers spanning three centuries that reported stories like these and many others. From the earliest paper, the *Potowmac Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser*, first published prior to statehood in 1791, to a newspaper of a more recent vintage, the African American paper, the *West Virginia Digest*, which ceased publication in 1946, the WVRHC's expansive collection of newspapers document the state and its history.



Chilins news stand Fairmont

2021 marked the 10th anniversary of the WVU Libraries grant to digitize the WVRHC's collection of West Virginia's historic newspapers. The initial grant was



awarded in 2011 by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress. Through successive cycles, this grant has allowed the West Virginia and Regional History Center to digitize over 100 newspapers which are available to search, download and read for free on the Library of Congress site, Chronicling America. These grants are part of the National Digital Newspaper Project (NDNP).

### **WVU and Chronicling America**

The initial stages of each grant cycle involve several steps. Tasks include selecting newspapers to be scanned and reviewing microfilm (or original newspaper copies if available), to make certain that the condition is good and scanning is feasible. Following that determination, each of the selected titles is researched and an historical essay is written to provide context for each newspaper. The time frame involved is largely centered on the copyright free era. Historic newspapers are digitized over a two-year period with a goal of uploading 100,000 pages per grant cycle. Currently, the WVRHC has uploaded 105 newspapers from regions across the state for a total of 500,000 pages.

### **Selection Process**

Three steps are involved in the selection process. First, geographic areas throughout the state are examined based on historical importance and representative coverage. Once an underrepresented area of the state is chosen, the second step is to determine a theme. Each region of the state is known for a specific industry or historic event. For example, the southern part of the state is representative of the coal mining industry, while the northern panhandle was heavily engaged in Civil War activities. Previous grant cycle themes have included newspapers documenting the oil and gas industry, Civil War Military Camp newspapers, printed by the soldiers themselves, the rich variety of African American newspapers, and most recently, papers documenting the mine wars, including Cabin Creek, Paint Creek, the Battle of Blair Mountain, the Baldwin Felts detective agency and the labor organizer Mother Jones.

Newspaper title selection is the third step. Papers chosen for digitization are selected due to their historical importance or special topics, such as papers dedicated to labor reporting or specific communities, like the Italian newspaper, *La Sentinella del West Virginia* published in the town of Thomas, and two German papers published in Wheeling, the *Deutsche Zeitung* and its earlier iteration, the *West Virginia Staats Zeitung*.

## **How do we do it?**

### *Work Flow:*

Once the microfilm or the actual newspapers themselves, have been examined for any gaps, readability issues, or problems, research can begin. Each newspaper selected is researched in order to reveal its history; including ownership, editors, name changes, political stances, editorial and political viewpoints, and historical context. Finally, a 550 word essay on the newspaper's history is drafted to provide that all important historical context. These essays are uploaded to Chronicling America and available alongside each paper.

### *The nitty gritty of digitization:*

Warning! Details provided here are information only an archivist could love! It takes two to put all of the research, scanning, and uploading into play. The WVRHC collaborates with the Library of Virginia, our grant partners, for the next steps in the digitization process. All technical aspects are handled at the Library of Virginia including microfilm duplication; digitization; content conversion; content and data management and technical coordination. Each of these steps is designed to produce high quality content to fulfil grant requirements in accordance with National Digital Newspaper Project (NDNP) specifications.

Not to get bogged down in technicalities, but this brief overview spells out some of the additional tasks handled by the Library of Virginia as our grant partners. Tasks include a review of raw TIFFs, project tracking, workflow management, content validation/verification, communication with subcontractors, shipping hard drives and materials between contractors and libraries, and periodic progress reports. One of our vendors for this project, Backstage Library Works, digitizes the microfilm from negative reels at 300-400 dpi into raw, uncompressed TIFF files. Backstage scans any original issues while also handling any preservation needs required for torn pages, etc.

## **Who does it?**

Here at the West Virginia and Regional History Center, our team includes an advisory board and student grant assistants. One of the grant requirements is the formation of an advisory board to assist in the selection process. The WVRHC board was originally formed during the 2011 grant cycle. Due to many retirements, a new board was formed this year to continue to assist with newspaper title selection. Grant assistants involved in researching and writing essays are drawn from the Ph.D



program within the History department. These students are invaluable to the program, bringing significant skills and a deep interest in West Virginia's historic newspapers.

### Grant cycle review

Now the fun part begins!

Each cycle brings with it a new level of excitement. Determining areas of interest, themes, selecting titles, and researching and writing essays is one of the most enjoyable parts of the process.

The first grant cycle, awarded in 2011, focused primarily on the years 1850-1876 due to that period's overwhelming significance in West Virginia history. Newspapers selected in the first grant cycle represented three distinct regions of the state, the Northern Panhandle, Southern West Virginia, and the north-central area. These papers focused primarily on the state's two capital cities, Wheeling and Charleston. In an unusual turn of events based largely on proximity, the state capital moved back and forth between the two cities for a number of years before settling in Charleston as its permanent home. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, the most significant newspaper of the time period, was designated as the top priority. A leading eastern panhandle newspaper, Charles Town's *Spirit of Jefferson*, and two pro-Southern newspapers, *Cooper's Clarksburg Register*, documenting the large Italian population in Clarksburg, and the *Kanawha Valley Star*, published in Charleston, were also selected for digitization. In addition to the four initial papers, a dozen more titles were scrutinized and from that number eight additional titles were selected.



Student reading a newspaper

### *2nd grant cycle:*

In 2013, the WVRHC was awarded a second grant to continue digitizing Charleston and Clarksburg newspapers, while bringing greater diversity to the catalog with a

significant African American newspaper, the *Pioneer Press*, and an Italian language paper, *La Sentinella del West Virginia*. A Civil War Union Camp newspaper, the *American Union*, and two Socialist papers, the *Labor Argus* and the *Socialist and Labor Star*, were also included. Both of these papers reported on labor unrest in the coal fields.

Two papers were considered to be of the utmost importance. The *Pioneer Press*, published in Martinsburg, was founded by J. R. Clifford. Clifford spent a lifetime promoting civil rights for African Americans in West Virginia. His life was full of stellar accomplishments including service in the Civil War, graduate of Storer College, the first African American college in the state, co-founder of the Niagara Movement with W.E.B. DuBois, and the first African American attorney in West Virginia.

*La Sentinella del West Virginia* was the state's first and only Italian language newspaper and as such, documented the growing significance of West Virginia's Italian population in Clarksburg.

### *3rd grant cycle:*

The newspapers digitized for the third grant cycle awarded in 2015 looked at developments that impacted the United States as a whole: the state's burgeoning oil industry and the advent of the Temperance movement. Several oil field newspapers reported on the oil industry including the *Sistersville Oil Review*, the *Walking Beam*, and my personal favorite, the *Volcano Lubricator*. Published in the town of Volcano, its title was derived from the Volcano oil field discovery that oil could be used as a lubricant, unknown prior to this discovery. Two Temperance papers proclaimed the great success of the movement in West Virginia: the *Temperance Star*, with its beautiful star masthead announced "Prohibition, our country's hope. Total abstinence our only safeguard," and the *West Virginia Freeman*, published in Parkersburg.



The Temperance Star

As always, the Civil War in West Virginia is of perennial interest. Military Camp newspapers from this period are few and far between, reflecting the movement of troops, the availability of soldiers skilled as newspapermen, and the proximity of a usable press. The Union paper, the *Knapsack*, and the only Confederate paper published in the state, the *Guerilla*, both documented the Battle of Charleston (read about these newspapers and the Battle of Charleston [here](#)) and its aftermath. An anti-slavery paper published in what was then western Virginia, the *Ceredo Crescent*, two more African American papers; the militant leaning *Advocate*, claiming to print "more news than any other race paper published," and the highly political *McDowell Times*, a leading African American newspaper in the state, were also added, among others.

#### *4th grant cycle:*

The fourth cycle, awarded in 2017, focused on Huntington as well as continued digitization of African American newspapers. Thanks to the NDNP grant program, all extant West Virginia African American newspapers will be digitized and available on Chronicling America. Receipt of the fourth grant enabled the WVRHC and the Library of Virginia to digitize newspapers that revealed the environment, daily life, and activities of significant African American and immigrant populations in the southern part of the state, the opening of the southern coalfields and the rise of the coal industry in West Virginia, coupled with the development of railroads that conveyed coal across the nation. Newspapers of importance for this cycle included the *Huntington Advertiser*, the *Huntington Dispatch*, and the *Huntington Herald*, three newspapers of note that held close standing with the *Wheeling Intelligencer* in state prominence. In addition, the *Bluefield Evening Leader* reported on the beginning of the railroad in Bluefield and its route across the southern portion of the state to its terminus in Huntington.

#### *5th grant cycle:*

Conflict served as the theme for the fifth grant awarded in 2019. Newspapers focused on two areas within the state. The first looked at newspapers from two counties, Jefferson and Berkeley, in the Eastern Panhandle. These counties became the center of important travel routes for military forces during the Civil War. Papers also included more coverage from the *Spirit of Jefferson*, still published today, the *Virginia Free Press* in Harpers Ferry, and the *Martinsburg Gazette*. The town of Martinsburg alone is known to have changed hands during the Civil War no less than 35 times. These papers reported on this hotly contested area of West Virginia bordering neighboring states Virginia and Maryland.



Young Women reading the New Dominion on the Cheat River

Two counties, in the southern part of the state near the border of Kentucky, Mingo and Logan, form the second area of interest. These counties were the center of the cataclysmic events of the Mine Wars of the early twentieth century. These papers provide firsthand information on the rise of the United Mine Workers, the role of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency in miner agitation, and the rise of the labor movement in the United States as well as the activities of labor organizer Mother Jones. As an extra bonus, these papers also carry coverage and reporting on the Hatfield McCoy feud.

*Proposed titles for the 6th grant cycle:*

WVU and the West Virginia and Regional History Center are happy to

announce the receipt of a sixth grant cycle awarded in August, 2022. Newspapers selected for this grant cycle will cover six counties, Pocahontas, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Randolph, Tucker, and Webster, all in the mountainous regions of the state. When West Virginia's major industries are considered, chances are the mind turns first to coal, but the timber industry in the state is of equal importance – not only was it a thriving business in a state largely blanketed by forests but at the outset, West Virginia's forests were so rich that they were considered one of the most impenetrable in the nation. Largely unrecognized in comparison to coal as an important factor inside the state, the timber industry had an enormous impact in these counties and beyond, on the natural habitat, local communities, and deforestation, which in turn led the call for restoration.

*Conclusion: Chronicling America and West Virginia newspapers*

With the receipt of the sixth grant, WVU will continue digitization of West Virginia's historic newspapers. Newspapers digitized throughout the previous five cycles have documented the state from the 1790s through 1926, the copyright free era. This period is of considerable historical significance for West Virginia as these years witnessed dramatic industrial, transportation, and population growth as well as events of the Civil War and important political and labor movements. The coal, oil and gas,

railroad, iron and steel, lumber, glass, and publishing industries thrived even as agricultural production rose to new levels. Immigration was triggered by the demands for industrial workers. Union organization and labor strife accompanied industrial expansion. Rapid population increases spurred the creation of African American, foreign language, and politically diverse newspapers. In this cycle, for the first time, we will push past the copyright free era and move towards the 1940s with two African American newspapers, the *West Virginia Digest* and the *West Virginia Weekly*, two papers that were not copyrighted.

Looking to find information on an ancestor? Have to write a school report? *Chronicling America* is one of the most important research tools available. Researchers and readers can view our holdings across the state on [Chronicling America](#).

With 105 newspapers currently available, the sixth grant cycle will add approximately 40 additional newspapers all free to read, research and download from the comfort of your favorite chair. Besides the extraordinary value of historic research, papers can be used for instruction from K-12 to college class projects. Newspapers provide a major resource for genealogical searches, first hand coverage of important historical events as well as the all important advertisements, and many other uses too numerous to mention.

In addition, researchers can also access our digitized newspapers from [WVU's West Virginia and Regional History Center newspaper page](#). Click on any arrow on the map, or the link to each newspaper.

The NDNP program has been of enormous support to WVU and the state of West Virginia by providing the funding for the digitization of West Virginia's historic newspapers. With over 3,000 searches a day and approximately 100,000 searches a month, the WVU Libraries newspaper program provides content researchers and readers need and want to access. But we're not the only ones. Other states throughout the Appalachian region, including Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and Maryland, also have digitized content on *Chronicling America*. Take a few minutes to browse this historic collection of newspapers covering West Virginia and the Appalachian region. You're guaranteed to find something interesting.



## UNC Asheville adds Bill and Alice Hart Collection

*Gene Hyde, University of North Carolina Asheville*

Earlier this year, UNC Asheville's Special Collections received the largest private donation in their history when Bill and Alice Hart donated their extensive private library to UNC Asheville. Containing more than 1200 monographs and 26 linear feet of ephemera and other materials to UNC Asheville, the William A. Hart, Jr. and Alice Huff Hart Western North Carolina Regional Library, known as the Bill and Alice Hart Collection, is the crown jewel of UNC Asheville's Special Collections.

Bill and Alice Hart curated and developed their collection over 55 years, systematically building a private collection of books, ephemera, manuscripts, recordings, and other materials that document the rich history and culture of Western North Carolina. Both are Western North Carolina natives with deep roots in the region. Alice Hart traces her family back to the original settlers of Jackson County, and her Madison County ancestors helped found Mars Hill College. Bill Hart's Buncombe County roots go back to the late eighteenth century.

Early in their marriage, the Hart's made the deliberate decision to learn as much about their home region as possible, acquiring books and other materials about Western North Carolina. They used these resources for both personal knowledge and for professional reasons. As a teacher and school administrator, Alice often brought materials into the classroom, and Bill used the collection to research and publish



Bill Hart, Alice Hart, and Janet McCue (L-R) in front of the Hart Collection at UNC Asheville. Janet is co-author of *Back of Beyond: A Horace Kephart Biography*.

articles on photographer George Masa and the Smokies. The collection has particular strengths in the Great Smoky Mountains and in hiking and camping, reflecting Bill's lifelong passion for the outdoors. He has section-hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, and chronicled his extensive hiking experience on trails in the Smokies in his book, *3000 Miles in the Great Smokies*.

They built a library in their home for the collection that totaled over 100 linear feet of shelf space, and they were generous with these materials, sharing their library with scholars. For years, while the collection was housed in the Hart's home, it was an invaluable resource that was used by scholars such as Dan Pierce, author of *Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park*, Janet McCue, co-author of *Back of Beyond: A Horace Kephart Biography*, and Rose Houk, author of *Pictures For A Park: How Photographers Saved The Great Smoky Mountains*.

UNC Asheville archivists Ashley Whittle and Gene Hyde became friends with the Harts, and enjoyed many visits to their house, sitting in their library, examining the books, and talking about the collection and how they curated and developed it. Often Bill would discuss a book or piece of ephemera, his deep knowledge making these conversations a series of master classes about the provenance, history, and context of an item.

During the summer of 2021 Bill and Alice Hart asked if UNC Asheville would be willing to accept the Bill and Alice Hart Collection for Special Collections. We immediately said yes and began planning the logistics of moving the collection to UNC Asheville.

The Harts had broad interests in WNC, and their collection was arranged categorically on their shelves in the following groups:

- Group 1: Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Group 2: Early WNC Travel and History
- Group 3: WNC Institutions
- Group 4: Appalachian Trail
- Group 5: Crafts, Humor, Foxfire
- Group 6: Folklore and Music
- Group 7: Fiction with Regional Settings
- Group 8: Cherokee and Indigenous History and Archeology
- Group 9: County Histories and Community Information
- Group 10: Natural History
- Group 11: Architecture, Photography, Forestry, Natural Resources, Blue Ridge Parkway, Mount Mitchell
- Group 12: Asheville and the Civil War

We resolved to keep this organization intact when we shelved the monographs in our reading room. For the monographs, we rearranged the entire book collection in the reading room, deaccessioning some items and moving other items to the main stacks, all



the while using our collection development policy of focusing on Western North Carolina as a guide. This opened up seven shelf sections along one wall, which was enough room to fit the [more than 1200 monographs donated by the Harts](#).

In addition to the monographs, the shelves in the Hart's collection also contained dozens of pamphlet boxes of various materials. We decided to process these materials [as a manuscript collection](#). This consists of 26 linear feet of pamphlets, flyers, correspondence, Great Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Handbooks, the *Great Smoky Mountains Colloquy*, Fontana North Shore Historical Association documents, early tourism guides and publications, publications from regional churches, schools, and businesses, *Appalachian Trail Data Books*, forestry materials and soil surveys, newspaper and journal articles, regional county guides, maps, catalogs and bibliographies used to develop the collection, and much more. In addition, there are over 100 record albums of old time, bluegrass, and regional music.

In order to capture Bill's narrative gift in describing books in the Collection, we made [a series of videos](#) in which Bill Hart selects important works from each group in the collection, annotating and providing context to major works and authors.

In addition to their private library at the Hart's house, we were also impressed by Alice Hart's watercolors of regional landscapes, many influenced by the photography of George Masa. Alice donated four watercolors that are displayed in the reading room along with the Hart Collection, and also provided an artist's statement and description of each watercolor.

Recognizing the significance and size of the Bill and Alice Hart Collection, the UNC Asheville foundation recognized it as a "major gift" to the University, and in September Chancellor Nancy Cable hosted a reception announcing the Hart's generous donation, an event that also included tours of the Hart Collection.

The Bill and Alice Hart Collection is open for research. A list of the [cataloged books is available here](#), a link to the [videos is available here](#), and a link to the [finding aid is available here](#).

## New collections in regional repositories

### Appalachian State University

**African American family photographs:** This collection consists of a photograph folder containing six 4x4 inch photographs of an unidentified African American family in Greenville, South Carolina, circa 1950s.

**Edward Bobal photograph album:** This photograph album was kept by Edward Bobal and his wife, Madelyn, while he awaited reassignment in the Army, in Asheville, North Carolina, during World War II. The album shows their 10 day stay in Asheville. Their photographs depict each other posed around the city, tourist sites, and various landmarks.

**Samuel Nowlin autograph book:** This autograph book is from Samuel H. Nowlin's time at Roanoke College. He kept it his Junior year from May to June 1860, before quitting school and volunteering in the Confederate Army. The book contains 9 full page handwritten entries penned by classmates and teachers, along with miscellaneous shorter entries, pen and ink illustrations, and two rolls of the "Junior Class of Roanoke College, 1860 and 61."

We received an addition to the **Chuck Miller papers**, the bulk of which is related to Camp Catawba, including letters he wrote home while attending the camp.

**Bumgarner family papers:** Personal papers of the Bumgarner family from Ashe and Wilkes Cos., NC. The materials range in date from 1892-2021.

### East Tennessee State University

**John Fain Anderson Scrapbooks (accrual), 1907-1928**, AppMs 288. Three additional scrapbooks of East Tennessee and regional clippings, photographs, and greeting cards, meticulously compiled and indexed by Anderson.  
<https://archives.etsu.edu/repositories/2/resources/187>.

**Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry Show films, 1961-1962**, undated, AppMs 890. Seven films of Flatt & Scruggs Martha White television appearances, shows #12, 20, 32, 34, 53, 60, and 81.

**Gump Family Papers (accrual), 1850-2008**, AppMs 364. Books, scrapbooks, genealogy research, photographs, and business records relating to the Gump family of Washington County, Tennessee.  
<https://archives.etsu.edu/repositories/2/resources/332>.

**Maggard Sound Studio Recordings circa 1965-2002**, AppMs 889. Approximately 2900 DAT and audiotape recordings of bluegrass and gospel artists recorded by the Big Stone Gap, Virginia studio. The collection also includes liner notes, office files and

pressing plates for 45rpm records.

<https://archives.etsu.edu/repositories/2/resources/839>.

**WETS-FM Records (accrual), circa 1998-2018**, UnivRec 208. DAT, CD, and audiotape recordings of the Studio One live music program at WETS-FM in Johnson City, Tennessee. Supplemental documentation including release forms, calendars, posters, and photographs.

## University of North Carolina Asheville

**[Roy A. Taylor Scrapbooks and Photographs Collection](#) [M2021.02]** - A collection of scrapbooks documenting Taylor's career in the NC General Assembly and in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he represented Western North Carolina from 1960 to 1977. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, political ads, telegrams and letters from constituents, official correspondence, flyers and promotional information from regional events, and other material. There are also notebooks of photographs and notebook of letters and correspondence. From the estate of Roy A. Taylor.

**[Bill and Alice Hart Collection](#), [M2022.02]** -The Bill and Alice Hart Collection contains over 1200 monographs and over 25 linear feet of ephemera and related materials. This comprehensive collection of books and materials was curated acquired by Bill and Alice Hart over 55 years and represents a broad spectrum of written material relating primarily to Western North Carolina. The collection's geographic focus is on 16 Western North Carolina counties: Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancy counties. Many of the books and pamphlets are extremely rare and represent the Harts' scholarship and pursuit of specific sources of information as their research delved deep into different aspects of Western North Carolina history and culture.

**[Asheville Global Report Collection](#) [M2020.01]** The Asheville Global Report (AGR) was a volunteer-run newspaper with a weekly circulation of 3000. It was distributed free at locations around Buncombe County and surrounding areas from 1999 to 2007. The AGR's mission statement was to "cover news underreported by mainstream media, believing that a free exchange of information is necessary to organize for social change," and it included local, national, and international news stories. Includes over 350 issues of the paper.

**[Walter Julius Damtoft Collection](#), [M2011-06-01]** - Documents related to Walter Damtoft, who attended the Biltmore Forest School and Yale University Forest School and spent his career with Champion Paper Company. As the first industrial forester in the US, Damtoft set the bar for the responsible use of our forests. The collection contains newspaper clippings regarding the Weeks Law, photographs, including international study tours, and materials related to Ruben Robertson and Champion Paper Company. The collection was recently reprocessed to include additional materials.