UPPER OHIO VALLEY
HISTORICAL REVIEW

Autumn/Winter 1983
Price $1.50
The Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review is published twice a year by the Wheeling Area Historical Society, Dr. Kenneth Robert Nodyne, Editor. The Review is printed for the society by West Liberty State College. The Review is distributed free to members and sold to the public at $1.50 a copy.

Persons interested in submitting articles should send two copies to the editor at West Liberty State College with a stamped self-addressed return envelope.

REV. CLIFFORD M. LEWIS, S.J. MEMORIAL ISSUE
VOLUME XIII AUTUMN/WINTER, 1983 NUMBER ONE

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IN MEMORY OF FATHER LEWIS, FIRST EDITOR OF THE UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

By Kenneth Robert Nodyne

"If the purpose of education is to prompt a human awakening in man, we believe that Father Lewis is a true example of education's success."

—Harry Hamm, Editor Wheeling, News Register, September 29, 1974.

The Reverend Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. was affectionately regarded by those in the Wheeling community interested in local history research as the "Dean of Wheeling Historians." In 1968, Father Lewis launched the first issue of the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review. Father Lewis' many duties led to a hiatus in publication of the Review. It was revived in 1972 under the editorship of his research assistant, Julia Pollack. In 1975, the Review was put on a regular publication schedule by its present editor.

Rev. Lewis was born on March 3, 1911 in Meadville, Pennsylvania, the son of a high school principal. In 1932, he received a B.A. degree from Allegheny College, majoring in English. After two years as a social science instructor in Erie County, Pennsylvania, Father Lewis received his Master's degree in Journalism from the University of Wisconsin in 1935. He returned to his hometown of Meadville and worked for a local newspaper.

In 1937 Clifford Lewis converted to Catholicism and married Catherine O'Keefe. The young couple shared a love of religion and music. But, tragedy intervened. Six months after the marriage, Catherine was killed in an automobile accident.

Prior to beginning a ten year course of study for the priesthood in 1942, Father Lewis edited publications for Pennsylvania State University. He was ordained at Woodstock College by the Most Reverend Francis Keough, Archbishop of Baltimore, in June, 1951.

Father Lewis' deep love of Wheeling and its history are demonstrated by the many articles which he has written about the city. These include "The Wheeling Suspension Bridge" in West Virginia History, 1974. This is the most comprehensive account of Wheeling's great historic bridge ever written. For the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review, he has written "Bishop Van De Velde's Journey Down the Ohio, 1831," Volume 1, Number 1, October 28, 1982; "The Triumph From Tragedy: Charles Ellet Jr. and the Collapse of the Wheeling Suspension Bridge," Volume IV, Number 2, Spring, 1976; "Francis H. Pierpont — A Man for Two States," Volume V, Number 1, Autumn, 1975; "Jesuits In Virginia, 1570-1850 — A Brief Account," Volume VI, Number 2, Spring 1977; "Nation's Greatest Earthquake, 1811-1812: Effect In Wheeling Reported By Ship-Builder Josiah Fox" Vol. IX, No. One, Autumn-Winter, 1979; "Career of Josiah Fox As Ship-Builder For the U.S. Navy: His Own Story," Vol. I, No. One Autumn, Winter, 1980.

Father Lewis has also played a central role in acquiring federal funds for the restoration of the West Virginia Independence Hall (Old Customs House). At the dedication of the structure, he delivered an address on its history.

His interest in historic preservation causes is further demonstrated by the instrumental role which he played in the designation of Wheeling's historic Suspension Bridge as a National Historic Landmark. The bridge was placed on the Registry of the National Historical Landmarks. As part of Wheeling's celebration of the United States Bicentennial on July 4, 1976, Father Lewis delivered the keynote address on the history of the Suspension Bridge.

Father Lewis' scholarly credentials also include publications which have gained him national recognition. Together with Albert J. Loomis, S.J. he co-authored the The Spanish Jesuit Missions in Virginia, 1570-1572, published in 1953 by the University of North Carolina Press. He has written articles for the forthcoming Hand- book of North American Indians to be published in a twenty volume set by the Smithsonian Institution.

Father Lewis died on March 17, 1983 while characteristically working on a historical project — the history of Wheeling College. He was buried on March 22, 1983 at the Jesuit Novitiate at St. Isaac Jogues, Warrensville, Pa. All of us involved in the study, interpretation, and writing of the history of this community will miss him.
Phillip Reed:
Prominent Black Educator of Wheeling

By
H. Lawrence Jones, Ed.D.
Ohio County Schools
February 1983

Phillip Nathaniel Reed was a prominent black educator in Wheeling, West Virginia for thirty-five years, serving as principal for segregated Lincoln School and later as Director of Guidance for Ohio County Schools. He presided over the integration of his beloved Lincoln School into Wheeling's public schools and then continued to provide the county leadership and guidance in race relations through the racially turbulent sixties and early seventies. He provided the youth and adults of both black and white races of the community with a model of intelligence and reasoned maturity during the county's transition from a racially segregated to a fully integrated society.

Born July 16, 1914, to the Reverend John H. Reed and Cornelia Johnson Reed in Luray, Virginia, Phillip Reed attended and was graduated from the Lincoln Grade and High School that he would later serve as principal.

During these years Lincoln High School served as the segregated black high school for the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia and drew students from the surrounding counties as well as from Ohio County.

After graduation from Lincoln, Reed then attended the segregated institution of Bluefield State College and was graduated with specialties in English and social studies.

Returning to Wheeling, Reed became a substitute teacher at Lincoln School during the 1939-1940 school year. This apprenticeship period of substituting is a common one for educators and provided Reed with experiences that enabled him to empathize with the special challenges and problems unique to the position. Later, as principal, he made special efforts to make substitutes in his building welcome.

The following school year, 1940-1941, Reed became the upper elementary teacher for Dunbar School, the black grade school for Triadelphia District. The community of Triadelphia, West Virginia, long has had a small black population that found employment in the nearby mines and on the railroad that served those mines linking Wheeling to Washington, Pennsylvania. Today Dunbar School still stands, having served as a school, later as a storage facility for Ohio County Schools and now as a privately owned storage facility and office. In 1943, Reed became Dunbar's teaching principal, and in 1947 he was appointed principal of his alma mater, Lincoln School.
Black Schools in Wheeling

Upon assuming the principalship of Lincoln School, Reed was faced with the difficult task of following John Henry Rainbow, Lincoln’s principal for the previous thirty-three years. Like Reed, Rainbow had also been a Lincoln School alumnus and he had presided over the move from the original Lincoln School building to the newly constructed building on the adjacent grounds. This building, still in use in Ohio County Schools, was completed in 1943. It was the latest black school in a long tradition of quality institutions.

The first school for black children in Wheeling, founded in 1866 by Dr. LaMoyne Hupp and Mr. John Jackson, was located on the north side of what was then 12th and High Streets. The students in the two-room school were taught by the West brothers from Mt. Pleasant, Ohio. These gentlemen were followed by Miss Harriet E. Carter, who in turn, was followed by Mr. William Gaskins, also from Mt. Pleasant. Around 1875 the black school was moved to the Second Ward School at Tenth and Chapline streets. In 1882, upon the death of Mr. Gaskins, James McHenry Jones became principal.

In 1893 the building burned to the ground and classes were temporarily held in the Market House, now Market Square, until 1894 when a new building was finished at the old location.

In 1898 it was determined that a high school department was necessary and desirable, and it was added to the existing program at the old location. When James McHenry Jones left Lincoln School to become president of West Virginia Colored Institute, now West Virginia State College, his brother Flem B. Jones became principal and remained in that position until 1908. J. W. Hughes then assumed the principalship until 1914, when Phillip Reed was born and the long tenure of John Henry Rainbow began.

When Phillip Reed became principal in 1947 he took charge of one of the newest and best equipped high schools in the Ohio Valley. The building contained offices, classrooms, and auditorium-gymnasium, suites of vocational rooms and a library. During Reed’s principalship, in 1952, rooms were added on an additional floor to accommodate the elementary grades.

Schools Desegregation Comes to Wheeling

In 1954 the United States Supreme Court in the case of Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas struck down the separate but equal interpretation of the Constitution. Ohio County Schools made the decision to proceed immediately with the implementation of that ruling. Reed called an all-school assembly and announced the decision’s implications to a silent and apprehensive student body. The students were given an opportunity to continue their education by immediately transferring to previously all-white Wheeling schools or to remain at Lincoln. Reed himself had the difficult task of counseling the students and their parents about the long range outcomes of staying at Lincoln or of choosing to be among the first to break the color barrier in the public schools. It was an individual-by-individual decision-making process. Most of the students made the decision to remain at Lincoln School. Leaving the familiar surroundings of the friendly and caring staff of Lincoln to enter a white world of potential hostility was a major task for many of the children and an important social change in the lives of their parents. That ambivalence of leaving a segregated school that was loved to enter the full equality that was their constitutional right is reflected in the statement that summarized the Lincoln Panthers’ First Reunion held in 1974:

“After years of inspiring and educating Black students of Wheeling and the Black students of Ohio, Marshall, Brooke, and for a time, Hancock Counties, Lincoln High School and Lincoln Grade School were closed. No other has or will replace Lincoln. The faculty gave to the students dedication, sincerity and love. The students responded with pride, ambition, and accomplishment.”

It is ironic that today the special education students housed in Lincoln School and their parents are faced with that same dilemma of leaving a loved and protective environment to merge into full integration with the students and programs of Wheeling Park High School.

When total racial integration came in 1958, desegregation applied to the staff as well as the students. Subsequent to the closing of Lincoln as a black school and its reopening as an alternative and special education institution, Reed was appointed teaching principal at Washington Grade School. This school was located at the corner of Main and 5th Streets in North Wheeling in a building erected in 1897. Thus, Reed had gone from the principalship of one of the county’s newest high schools to the teaching principalship of one of its oldest grade schools. This change became for him a new challenge as he directed an all-white faculty in a school with an almost all-white student body. But working diligently with the parents of the local PTA, he successfully disabused many of the parents of their fears and actively involved them in the on-going desegregation process. His commitment to the principles of equality and democracy became apparent when he instituted self-government techniques in his classroom and taught the students the basics of self-determination.

Creation of Counseling and Guidance Services

In 1960, President John F. Kennedy promoted appropriations through the National Defense Education Act to support the creation of counseling programs in the public schools. Phillip Reed saw an opportunity to do formally that which he had been doing informally for so many years — counsel students and their parents. He was appointed
Director of Guidance for Ohio County Schools that year and completed his graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh and Columbia University in the new profession of counseling. The summer he spent in New York City finishing his graduate work was enjoyable to him and productive for the school system. His love of the arts found full expression there and each year he brought back to Wheeling a broadened perspective.

His goals as Director of Guidance for the county school system were to have a trained counselor in each school, to institute a comprehensive student record-keeping procedure, to create a testing program for grades 1-12, and to provide for individual and group counseling services for students. Upon his retirement, each of his goals had been realized, except for the provision for counseling services for all of the elementary schools.12

Always in the vanguard for providing human services in the county school system, Reed developed the first job description for newly added counseling staff. This compilation of appropriate duties ensured the proper utilization of the expertise of the counseling and continues as the basis for the counseling services provided by the school system. Reed also developed the prototype of the present Cumulative Record Folder as a standard collection of relevant student data. Under his tutelage the first formal career education program was instituted as well as high school Career Day, which continues with the support of the Wheeling Chamber of Commerce. Reed also guided the needs assessment process for better services to students and their parents.13

The summer school principalship was also a responsibility of Reed, a task he enjoyed immensely. As he often noted, there were frequently more than 400 students in attendance, with an average of 40 students each year graduating from high school because of the availability of the summer credit program. Once again, it was the provision of services to those who were most in need of them that gave him pleasure.14

Reed's reasoned and quiet maturity found its fullest expression during the turbulent civil rights atmosphere of the late sixties and early seventies. He provided leadership and guidance to both the school system's professional staff, the parents, and the students. Ohio County Schools found its way through that period with no disruption of the educational process, an increased awareness of the needs and rights of black students, and with a renewed commitment to full equality.15

The committee to develop the drug education policy of the school board was headed by Reed and became a model of intelligent and thoughtful balance between the need to punish the infractions of the law while still addressing the need to change conditions that foster drug abuse by children.16

Reed's Christian faith was a quiet one, just as he was a quiet man, but was clearly evidenced by commitment to the ideals of love and charity and service for all. As a member of the Macedonia Baptist Church in Wheeling and the son of a preacher, he had developed a special gift of intoning in his clear bass voice a relevant, meaningful and moving prayer.17

Phillip Reed retired on June 30, 1975, planning to indulge his lifelong goal of traveling. He loved New York City and visited it as often as possible. His most frequently stated travel goal was to visit the Netherlands because of his fascination with the Dutch attitude of tolerance and acceptance. At his retirement luncheon, with the staff of counselors that had now grown to fourteen, he was given luggage, a season ticket to the Wheeling Symphony and the grateful thanks of his colleagues. Less than a month after he retired, he died at home on July 24, 1975, having lived a life of service, erudition, compassion and dignity. Reed is buried in Stone Church Cemetery in the Elm Grove section of Wheeling.19

On his application for teaching in 1940 Phillip Reed responded to the question of why he wanted to teach by stating, "I have chosen teaching as a profession because it is the most forceful way of reaching the greatest number of my race."

Thirty-five years later he had certainly accomplished that goal. But in a larger sense, the model of his life provided a most forceful way of reaching the greatest number of all the races in Wheeling.

Notes
1. Records of Ohio County Schools, reviewed December 30, 1981.
2. Ohio County Schools.
3. Interview with Nellie Joseph, teacher for Ohio County Schools, November 15, 1981.
4. Ohio County Schools.
8. Bonar.
9. Interview with Ann Thomas, former student at Lincoln High School, graduate of Wheeling High School, and first black graduate of Ohio Valley Hospital School of Nursing, January 6, 1981, Wheeling, W.V.
12. Ohio County Schools.
13. Ohio County Schools.
14. Ohio County Schools.
16. Ohio County Schools.
17. Interview with Eileen Miller, Black teacher at Lincoln School, August 30, 1980.
19. Ohio County Schools.
ORIGINS OF THE 1885 STRIKE IN THE WHEELING IRON AND STEEL MILLS

By
Dr. Amos J. Loveday Jr.
Chief Curator
The Ohio Historical Society

As the Steubenville Daily Herald reported the incident, striking nailers, under the cover of heavy fog, laid siege to the Laughlin Nail Works at Martins Ferry on September 26, 1885. After a gun battle lasting more than two hours, the defenders, including hired guards, forced the forty attackers to retreat, carrying with them several wounded.1

Such is the bare outline of the most violent incident of the year-long strike that disrupted the nail industry during 1885 and 1886. The strike, known in the Wheeling area as the "Great Nail Strike," was remarkable in several particulars. It was, as has already been indicated, a lengthy confrontation — lasting just a few days short of a year. The length and the regional extent of the strike resulted in a reduction in the national nail supply, thus creating an opportunity for the wire nail, a product of new technology, to gain a substantial share of the market. But, from the perspective of the student of history, the origins of the Great Nail Strike are perhaps the most significant feature. This confrontation between labor and management, which has been scarcely noted in the secondary sources, provides an opportunity to study many of the forces that were shaping industrial America during the late Victorian era.

The Wheeling nail industry had grown out of a single plant — Top Mill — that David Agnew and Peter Schoenberger, two Pittsburgh manufacturers, had organized in 1833. During the 1840s and early 1850s, workmen from this original plant, with the aid of locally generated capital, organized several other mills (the Belmont, Virginia, LeBelle, Benwood, Riverside, and Bellerii). Immediately after the Civil War, these mills expanded vertically and, by the early 1870s, had become the largest group of nail manufacturers in the country.2

In 1874, the Wheeling Intelligencer proclaimed, "Wheeling now justly claims to be the greatest nail manufacturing city in the United States. ..." Shortly thereafter, The Iron Age echoed the Intelligencer's claim, informing its readers that "Wheeling is doing a leading nail business." The Wheeling manufacturers, by the early 1870s, employed some 3,500 workmen, operated 625 nail machines, and, as a group, accounted for almost 40 percent of the nation's nailmaking capacity.3

Before the Civil War, skilled craftsmen — mostly nailers and puddlers — provided the management and a large share of the capital for the nail factories that were built in Wheeling. The Norton brothers (George, Edward, and Ben) and E. W. Stevens, all nailers who had come to Wheeling during the 1840s, literally left the production lines to organize the new factories and govern the establishments with which they were associated. Stevens, addressing an assemblage of workmen in 1856, instructed his audience to "Look around you and you see who are the owners and managers of the most successful establishments of this city. The answer will be the working men — mechanics."4

This tradition of workingmen/owners carried with it an emphasis on quality. During the 1850s, the Wheeling-made nail gained recognition as a high quality item and, largely on this basis, a progressively larger share of the market of the upper and mid-Ohio Valley. Norton and Stevens, as well as other members of the group they represented, were attuned to the quality, often making reference to its significance as a marketing aid.5

In the years immediately after the Civil War, the high cost of pig iron forced all of the nail manufacturers to build blast furnaces. The expense of the blast furnace created a need for large amounts of capital and attracted new men, such as Crispin Ogleby, L. S. Delaplain, and Alexander Laughlin, to the business. By the early 1870s, a whole new group of stockholders and owners had come to control the industry. Once in power, they imposed a new management philosophy. They emphasized a hierarchy of management that clearly distinguished between financial and mechanical skills. Moreover, they imposed an accounting system that permitted evaluation of operations largely in quantitative terms. By the mid-1870s, the management system was having a noticeable effect. Wheeling mills led the industry in output per machine, favorable ratios of waste metal to output, and several other measures of efficiency. As a result, Wheeling came to be known for the cheapest nail in the country. It was largely on this reputation that the industry prospered during the 1870s.6

As the factories grew in size, improved in efficiency, and, as the emphasis shifted from quality to quantity, old relationships between management and labor changed. By the early 1870s, for example, many of the craftsmen/owners had left, some through retirement, but others, like Edward Norton, were forced to withdraw by the new management. Moreover, as nail making became more capital-intensive, there were fewer opportunities for nailers, puddlers, or other skilled operatives to occupy policymaking positions.7

Nonetheless, throughout the 1870s, management had relatively good relationships with labor. One reason for smooth relations was the pay rate which in Wheeling factories was higher for most categories than in Pittsburgh. Several Wheeling factories had agreements with workers that guaranteed payment in excess of the going rate in return for agreements not to strike. The "Wheeling bonus," as the extra wage was called, was sufficient to keep the mills at Wheeling running throughout the 1870s.8

By the early 1880s, the management system at Wheeling was capable of precisely projecting costs and analyzing competitors' operations. The
managers discovered during the 1879-1882 era that their labor costs were excessive compared to other mills. By 1879, for example, Eastern manufacturers paid their skilled labor one-third less than their Wheeling counterparts, thus offsetting much of the competitive advantage Wheeling manufacturers had gained from efficiency. This realization and a bad recession in the nail business at the end of the 1870s led the manufacturers to undertake a major effort at cost containment. It was this effort that eventually led to the “Great Nail Strike.”

In May 1879, the Wheeling manufacturers, along with those in other parts of the Ohio Valley, asked “the skilled operatives of our factories to consent to a reduction in wages to the prices paid in Eastern mills…” The workmen refused, but a confrontation was avoided by an upswing in the economy in late 1879. Demand rose, and nails became so profitable that everyone in the industry was making money.

Between 1879 and 1882 the Wheeling manufacturers watched as the profitable market encouraged expansion of old and the construction of new nail factories. Moreover, Wheeling managers observed that their labor costs grew in comparison with other mills that were dispensing with costly division of responsibility between nailers and feeders. Consequently, in 1882, when the iron industry negotiated a new wage scale, the Wheeling manufacturers held out for the elimination of the “Wheeling bonus.” The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the union that represented Wheeling workers, refused to go along with this reduction. Other manufacturing centers, such as Pittsburgh and the Mahoning Valley, did not support the Wheeling manufacturers and continued to operate their factories. They threatened to take a sizeable portion of the Wheeling market, and competing companies recruiting striking workmen placed in jeopardy the labor pool upon which the Wheeling mills depended. Thus, the Wheeling manufacturers were forced to accede.

In October 1882, the manufacturers reopened the mills with the Wheeling bonus intact. The experience had, however, clearly focused the problem. Wage reductions would be impossible unless the entire industry cooperated. This realization set in motion a series of events that culminated in the Wheeling manufacturers seizing control of and changing the function of the Western Nail Association. The manufacturers also concluded the 1882 strike believing that worker unity presented an obstacle to lowering wages. This, too, set in motion a series of events which concluded in an effort to disrupt the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers.

As early as 1879, several of the Wheeling mills considered switching from wrought iron to steel nail plate as a way of reducing costs. After but limited experimentation, the market improved, profitability returned, and the matter was dropped. During 1882, when the negotiations and the strike were in progress, several firms again considered shifting to steel. J. N. Vance, president of the Riverside Mill, led a group of upper level managers from all of the Wheeling nail companies in the formation of the Bessemer steel production firm. The Wheeling Steel Company, as the new corporation was called, was incorporated with an authorized capital of $1,000,000.00. The venture was short-lived, however, for in December 1882 the Wheeling Iron and Nail Company withdrew, followed a month later by the Benwood Mill.

Although a setback, the defection did not signal an end to the conversion to steel. Indeed, several of the companies embarked on an effort to build their own steel works. By late 1884, several of the firms had or were getting ready to put on line the Bessemer steel works. Among those were the Riverside Nail Works, the Bellaire Nail Works, and a steel plant jointly owned by the companies that operated the Benwood and Belmont Nail Works.

Labor cost savings was the sole reason for the shift to steel by the nail firms. Bessemer steel nail plate eliminated the need for wrought iron manufacturing, the least efficient part of the nail making process. This significantly reduced the number of skilled employees the factories required. Moreover, the reduction fell almost entirely on puddlers, the group of workmen most vocal about wage increases and hourly reduction.

A key prerequisite for successful conversion was preventing other groups — nailers, rollers, heaters — from supporting the puddlers and closing down the Wheeling mills. When it became apparent that conversion to steel was under way, the puddlers asked the nailers to demand extra money (twenty percent) for cutting steel nails. In 1884, this provision was written into the scale agreement for the entire industry. With this agreement consummated, the union appeared to have the upper hand. Even industry spokesmen played down the impact of steel. For example, the LaBelle declared its intention to manufacture both iron and steel nails. In addition, several firms joined to organize a bridge company especially for the purpose of utilizing the puddlers who would be thrown out of work by the steel nail.

Just when the Amalgamated appeared to have worked out a process for saving most of the puddler’s jobs, internal controversies within the union destroyed the agreement. Each nailer operated four machines. At each machine the nailer directly employed a feeder who forced the nail plate into the machine. The nailer, who was compensated based on the number of keys manufactured, divided the income from the machine equally with the feeder. Since the early 1870s, there had been “bad blood” between the nailers and feeders over pay rates. The feeders wanted five-eighths of the income produced by the machine he worked, while the nailer favored the 50-to-

In 1875, when feeders went on strike, the nailers purchased and installed a few automatic feeders. This threat was sufficient to bring the feeders back to work, but not before a sharp break between the two groups occurred. The confrontation continued off and on throughout the next decade, with the nailers and the companies threatening to install more automatic feeders every time the feeders complained too intensely.

In August 1884 at a meeting of the Amalgamated Association of
Iron and Steel Workers in Pittsburgh, the feeders asked the other crafts to support a demand for a wage increase. The resolution, which came before the convention on August 8th, found considerable support. “In the opinion of many mill men,” one of the delegates said, “the feeders are pretty near right in their demand for more wages.” The nailers revolted at the support the puddlers were giving to the feeders. Within hours of the time the wage question was introduced, the nailers began to disavow their intent to charge the extra ten percent on steel nails.

Taking advantage of the break in union solidarity, the companies struck with a vengeance. LaBelle, the company that had only three months earlier installed new furnaces, discharged all its puddlers. The Intelligencer, commenting on the swiftness and unexpected nature of the move, said that it “came with the force of a blow... and was regarded as a break which would be followed by all other mills...” Indeed, the Intelligencer’s prediction was correct. Other mills followed suit during the fall and winter, and, by spring, a large number of the puddlers had been thrown out of work.

There is evidence to suggest that the manufacturers had a hand in this internal union disagreement. The Belleire and Riverside mills apparently encouraged the nailers to resist the feeders by promising to purchase automatic feeders if the feeders struck. In return, the nailers dropped the extra cost for cutting steel nails. The workmen in most departments of the mills regarded the nailers with suspicion and repeated rumors of a party at which the nailers and the owners had hammered out this agreement. What is not clear is whether or not the management had any hand in encouraging the feeders to raise their demand. The speed with which the management moved to take advantage of the situation suggests that, at the very least, the management knew of it in advance.

When the nailers refused to demand the extra rate for cutting steel nails, the Amalgamated Association threatened them with expulsion. Before the Amalgamated could act, the nailers voluntarily withdrew from the union, and, led by John K. Weir, President of the Hershey Lodge (the Belleire Mill), organized a new union — the United Nailers.

By January 1885, the Amalgamated Union had been shuttered, and management not only had a chance to divest itself of the puddlers, but, in fact, was at liberty to deal as it chose with other segments of the union. That this was management’s intent became clear in the spring of 1885. As the time approached to renegotiate the nailers’ wage, manufacturers spoke of reducing the pay rate. Meeting in Cincinnati on May 27, 1885, the Western Nail Association concluded to reduce the pay rate from twenty-one to seventeen cents per keg (for ten penny nails), thus making the first cut in nailing rates in over a decade. Manufacturers claimed the move was necessary to “compensate for the differences in cost of production” between the Eastern and Western factories.

The nailers would have none of the cut, and, in late June, went on strike. On July 8, 1885, the manufacturers issued an ultimatum — the nailers had until July 11 to accept the new scale at which time the mills were to be opened “and the machines given to nail feeders or any other competent person or persons who will agree to cut nails at the price...”

The nailers responded with skepticism and humor. “No man who has not served a regular apprenticeship as a nailer can do so work,” one workman confidently predicted. Another said, “talk about circuses, that [allowing feeders to operate the machines] would beat any three-ring show Barnum had ever dreamed of.” In addition, the nailers taunted the feeders by resolving not to admit apprentice nailers from amongst the ranks of the feeders. On July 26, 1885, the first feeders began to operate machines at the Benwood Mill. In rapid order, the other mills opened with feeders running machines. By early September, it became apparent that the feeders could quickly develop the skills that the nailers had thought it impossible to acquire without training. Violence, such as the attack noted in the opening paragraph, took place in the fall as nailers began to sense their livelihood slipping away. Throughout the winter and early spring, the manufacturers held fast to their position on wages and added that any settlement had to recognize the feeders as full-fledged nailers with first priority to the jobs in the mills.

Production gradually increased, and, by early spring, at least two-thirds of the machines were back in operation. Disheartened nailers, whose numbers steadily dwindled as individuals moved to other jobs or returned to the mills, attempted to organize a boycott of the “scab” nails. But the response from unsympathetic unions was light. “Will the United Nailers, after opposing the feeders as they did, after sacrificing the boilers as they did, after deserting the Amalgamated Association, explain by what right,” one critic wondered, “they ask for support?” The nailers had no place to turn, so, in May 1886, they asked for readmission to the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, and, the following month, settled with the manufacturers for the seventeen-cent scale.

Concurrent with the efforts to introduce the steel nail and subdue the unions, the Wheeling manufacturers set out to gain control of the Western Nail Association. The Association, organized by Pittsburgh manufacturers during 1876 in an attempt to control the nail market, had focused upon establishing production quotas for plants and standardizing prices. Although the Wheeling mills had been members of the Association from the outset, support at Wheeling had been grudgingly given. Before 1884, Pittsburgh interest, led by J. D. Weeks, secretary of the Western Nail Association and editor of The Iron Age, controlled the Association’s policy, largely, in the opinion of many, to the detriment of Wheeling interest. Initially, the Wheeling men were willing to cooperate where they could and ignored the Association where cooperation was not feasible. Beginning in 1879, however, the Wheeling manufacturers pushed for changes in the Association’s policy.

At first, the Wheeling men asked that the Association assume the
role of industrial bargaining agent, thus separating the nail industry from
the rest of the iron industry in discussions with the Amalgamated Associ-
ation of Iron and Steel Workers. Pittsburgh nail makers, most of whom
also manufactured other products, resisted, and, when the market picked
up in late 1879, the issue was put aside. As the 1882 talks with the Amal-
gamated approached, the Wheeling representatives to the Western Nail
Association again sought to have the organization bargain with the Amal-
gamated and seek a separate settlement for those skills, such as puddlers,
which had rates tied to the general wages in the iron industry. When the
Western Nail Association failed to do this, the Wheeling firms set up their
own bargaining unit and attempted to force down wages. As already
noted, the efforts met with failure, largely because the other nail factories
continued to operate. The absence of support from the Western Nail
Association demonstrated clearly to the Wheeling men that improvements in
cost containment would require them to gain more influence in the
councils of the organization.

The Wheeling manufacturers, after 1883, sought permission from
the Western Nail Association to reduce the selling price for steel nails,
thus giving them a competitive advantage over manufacturers of wrought
iron cut nails. Members outside of the Wheeling area were not supportive
of this request. Since the Wheeling firms were contemplating the
switch to steel nails, reduction in prices would place other manufacturers
at a disadvantage. The Western Nail Association indirectly, but nonetheless
actively, opposed the shift to steel. For example, J. D. Weeks, secretary
of the Association, had written critically of steel nails in The Iron Age
as early as 1882. Weeks’ opinion scared stockholders and was a contrib-
uting factor in the failure of the joint effort at building a steel plant in 1882.
In addition, it seems likely that firms outside of Wheeling, at least pass-
ively, encouraged the puddlers to seek higher prices for cutting nails in
1894. Such an agreement would have largely offset any savings from steel
nails, therefore preserving the existing price system.

After the failure to gain support during the 1882 strike, the Wheel-
ing representatives began to take a more aggressive stance in the Western
Nail Association meetings. For example, they began to have strategy
meetings prior to the Association meetings, and, by early 1884, appeared
to be voting as a block. With the assistance of mills in the Portsmouth
and Ironton area, the Wheeling men had enough votes to control the
Western Nail Association. The first hint that the Wheeling manufacturers
had taken control of the Western Nail Association came in early 1885
when Wheeling and Pittsburgh newspapers carried reports that the offices
of the Association were to be moved to Wheeling. Throughout March and
early April, R. F. Keating, president, and J. D. Weeks, secretary of
the Association, give little credence to these reports. They are, Keating said,
"absolutely without foundation." 29

On April 9, the Western Nail Association met briefly in Pittsburgh.
After calling another meeting to be convened on April 21 at Wheeling,
mills to produce tinplate, seamless pipe, and a variety of wrought and finished goods. By 1921, when the companies merged to form Wheeling Steel, only the nail factory — the LaBelle — was left. It continues to operate today, one of two cut nail manufacturers left in the country.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Steubenville Daily Herald, September 28, 1885.

2. The Wheeling Intelligencer, February 2, 1874; Henry Dickerson Scott, Iron & Steel in Wheeling (Toledo, Ohio: Caslon Co., 1929), pp. 6-8; For a complete examination of the integration which took place after the Civil War in the Wheeling firms, see Amos J. Lovelady, "The Cut Nail Industry 1776-1890, Technology, Cost Accounting and the Upper Ohio Valley," Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1979, pp. 115-147.

3. The Wheeling Intelligencer, March 7, 1874; The Iron Age, April 15, 1875, p. 11. The figures on the number of employees and machines were generated by adding figures which appeared in The Wheeling Intelligencer during early 1874. Between January and April, the Intelligencer carried several articles that reviewed the history and current status of the major factories.

4. The Wheeling Intelligencer, February 2, 1874, February 5, 1874, and April 9, 1856; Scott, Iron & Steel, pp. 8-31.

5. Ibid., February 2, 1874.


8. Ibid., September 21, 1882.


14. The Benwood Ironworks, "Minute Book, January 27, 1880 to August 4, 1892," p. 4; United States Census Bureau, Report of the Statistics of Wages in the Manufacturing Industries (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office) 1886, pp. 197, 205-236; The Wheeling Intelligencer, November 20, 1885 and September 18, 1884. I have used the term puddle to describe those who worked the wrought iron. During the 1870s, the puddling furnaces were replaced by boiling furnaces, and, properly speaking, the apparatus should be called boilers. However, the two terms are used interchangeably in the sources. I have settled upon puddler for consisteny.

15. Ibid., January 16, April 22 and 29, May 10 and 17, 1884, and May 10, 1886.


17. The Wheeling Intelligencer, February 28, 1872, April 24, April 26, and May 11, 1875; The Iron Age, March 12, 1874, p. 3, and December 30, 1875, p. 5.

18. Ibid., April 23, 1885, p. 17; The Wheeling Intelligencer, August 8 and 12, 1884.

19. Ibid., August 9, 1884.

20. Ibid., May 10, 1885, September 29, 1884; The Steubenville Daily Herald, November 19, 1885.

21. The Wheeling Intelligencer, September 15, 1884, January 19, 1885, and March 27, 1885; The Steubenville Daily Herald, July 15, 1885.

22. The Wheeling Intelligencer, May 29, 1885 and June 2, 1885.

23. The Steubenville Daily Herald, July 9, 1885.

24. Ibid., July 17, September 28, November 11 and 12, 1885; The Wheeling Intelligencer, July 10, 1885 and January 6, 1886.

25. Ibid., April 14, June 1, and June 26, 1886.

SEARCHING FOR YOUR UPPER OHIO VALLEY ANCESTORS IN THE WEST VIRGINIA AND REGIONAL HISTORY COLLECTION

By

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The West Virginia and Regional History Collection of the West Virginia University Library has a large and continually growing collection of published books, county court records, photographs, maps, newspapers, microfilm, unpublished personal papers, and memorabilia that are resource materials for those interested in studying historical aspects of West Virginia or genealogies of West Virginia families. Those interested in researching a West Virginia family that lived in the five-county Northern Panhandle area will have a variety of materials to aid them.

The two primary ways for patrons to utilize the facilities are either to visit the Collection or to obtain materials through Interlibrary Loan. But my first advice to anyone is to consult any or all of these published materials before doing either. Your search here will be less time-consuming if you do some advance preparation prior to your visit.

These three books should be available at your public library: Hess, James W. Guide to Manuscripts and Archives in the West Virginia Collection. Morgantown: West Virginia University Library, 1974.

This Guide describes our holdings of unpublished materials that were accessioned prior to 1974. It is arranged alphabetically by the title of the collection. In addition, there is an index in the back arranged by subject and by names of people and places. The materials described in the Guide must be used here at the collection almost exclusively, although there are a limited number of microfilms that do circulate.

Materials accessioned since the Guide was published are indexed in a card file at the Collection. One must visit the Collection to use the file.


This book contains an extensive index to names, places, and military units associated with the Civil War.


It indexes thirteen periodicals, mostly published in West Virginia, beginning in about 1892.

Here at the Collection are a number of materials that are not discussed in the aforementioned books. I'll describe them briefly:
Historical Records Survey

This is one of our most heavily used collections. It was prepared during the 1930's by the Work Projects Administration, which arranged and indexed all the county records that were available at the time. The Collection has the original records and the microfilm copies, both of which can be used here. The microfilm copies also circulate on Interlibrary Loan.

For the five-county upper Ohio Valley area, the HRS Inventory lists holdings of interest to genealogists. Most of them are:

Brooke
marr. 1799-1900
daths 1854-1899
wills, inventories 1800-1892

Hancock
births 1857-1896 (1859-63 missing)
marr. 1864-1912 (1875-1876 missing)
daths 1865-1899 (1885 and 1892 missing)
wills 1848-1890
deeds, wills, inventories 1848-1899
appraisals 1889-1915

Marshall
daths 1855-1860
births 1853-1859
wills (etc) 1816-1899

Wetzel
marr. 1854-1899
daths 1854-1899 (missing 1862, 64, 72, 73)
births 1854-1899 (missing 1863, 64, 68, 70, 72, 73, 76)
wills 1847-1899 (missing 1856,63, 64)

Ohio
births 1853-1857
daths 1853-1864
marr. (listed by males) A-Z 1791-1874
marr. (listed by males) 1875-1899
marr. (listed by females) 1791-1899
index to wills 1776-1885
will books 1-4 1874-1885 (approx.)
will books 5-8 1875-1899 (approx.)
wills, abstracts 1777-1886
wills, no dates

Census Microfilm
We have the census microfilm for Virginia for 1810 to 1860, and the West Virginia census microfilm for 1870 to 1900. The 1890 West Virginia census was damaged in a fire. All that remains is a special census of Union veterans and widows of Union veterans of the Civil War. We have ordered the recently released 1910 census and Soundex Index and may have it available by the end of the year.

There are published census indices for Virginia for 1810 to 1850 which are available here and most likely at your public libraries also. We own the Soundex Index for the West Virginia census for the years 1880 and 1900. Our census microfilm for 1810 to 1890 may be borrowed on Interlibrary Loan, however, the Soundex Index does not circulate.

Personal Name Indices

Two names indices that have been done here are the Personal Name Index, a card file that indexes fifty unindexed books published prior to the 1930's, and the Index to the Adjutant General's Report for 1864 and 1865. The Adjutant General's Report is also a good source of information about military units of the Union Army in West Virginia.

Our information about Confederate troops is scanty as the official records are located in Richmond, Virginia. Check the previously mentioned books by Hess and Shetler for information about Confederate troops.

West Virginia University Alumni

For those searching information about family members who attended West Virginia University, the Collection has all the Monticolas, the yearbook, as well as the student and faculty directories and the commencement programs listing recipients of degrees. Some of the old catalogues list students who were attending school here at the time. The Daily Athenaeum, the student newspaper, is on microfilm and there is a card index to the years 1887 to 1898 approximately. The university archives are divided between the Collection and the Administration Office at Stewart Hall.

Newspapers on Microfilm

A card file in the Robert C. Byrd Room of the Collection lists newspaper holdings from over one hundred municipalities in West Virginia. There are also a Miscellaneous Newspaper File and a Special Edition File which are limited in scope but have, on occasion, proven useful to researchers. None of the Northern Panhandle newspapers are indexed except for the Wheeling Intelligencer. That index is contained in one drawer and covers the years roughly from 1852 to 1940 and is of limited value.

Some titles and holdings for Northern Panhandle newspapers are:

Weirton
ISU Independent News, October 1950-July 16, 1961
Weirton Daily Times, 1931-date, half of 1938 missing
West Virginia Department of Mines Report

The West Virginia Department of Mines Annual Report contained very specific information about each individual miner who was killed or injured in a mine accident. These data were published annually from 1883 to 1925. We have the Reports for all those years except 1884-1894, and the fatalities are arranged by county.

County Court Records

As many of you already know, the Collection has many court records from the five-county area, and we have microfilmed most of them. Complete descriptions can be found in the Guide by Hess. The Ohio County records are listed as No. 684 in the Guide. Those are indexed three ways; by name, subject, and by chronological order. Our alien declarations include Volume I up to 1860. We do not have any from 1861 on, contrary to what many patrons believe. We have never had Volume II.

The Brooke County records, No. 71 in the Guide, are indexed in the same three ways. The Wetzel County Court Records are not as complete. There are a Grantor Index and a Grantee Index on microfilm. See No. 966 in the Guide. No. 563 describes the Marshall County Court Records, but that set is not indexed. There are no records here for the Hancock County Court.

Other Collections

Our book collection contains a large collection of county histories, city directories, and telephone books. Upon checking our card catalogue against the recently published annotated bibliography, “The Wheeling Area,” by Kenneth R. Nodine and Dennis E. Lawther, I discovered that we own all of the titles cited except for the numbers 19, 45, 54, 60, and 75. Also, we own a few titles in addition to those listed in the bibliography. Subject heading entries in our card catalogue show the following:

- Weirton – 8
- Moundsville – 14
- Wheeling – 90
- New Martinsville – 3
- Benwood – 4
- Follansbee – 2
- Chester – 1
- Wellsburg – 6
- West Liberty – 2
- Triadelphia – 2
- McMachen – 1
- Bethany – 3
- (College) – 5
- New Cumberland – 1
Ohio County – 17
Marshall County – 9
Brooke County – 14
Hancock County – 10
Wetzel County – 10

This includes all entries regardless of date or subject so many of these will be of limited use to genealogists.

We have a pamphlet collection that can sometimes be helpful to genealogists. It contains most of the subject headings listed above. Our map collection contains some plat maps and is indexed by subject and year in a card file. Our photographs are arranged by subject but there do not appear to be too many from the Northern Panhandle Area.

General Information

For those of you who have visited in the past years, the Collection is no longer located on the tenth floor of the main library. During the summer of 1980, the Collection was moved to the old Law School Building, renamed Colson Hall. It is across the street from the Main Library, on University Avenue, and is located on the second floor. Probably the best place to park your car is in the Mountainlair Parking Garage although on weekdays, before noon during the regular fall and spring terms, it is difficult to find a parking place there. The parking fee is 50 cents for all day.

Our hours of operation are 8-5 Monday thru Friday, and 9-5 Saturdays. Since those hours are slightly different when school is not in session, it is a good idea to call before you plan to visit. Our telephone number is 1-304-293-3536.

On your first visit to the Collection we require that you fill out a User Form if you use any materials other than published books. Those of you who filled out registration cards in the past when we were located over at the main library must fill out new forms also. On your subsequent visits it is necessary only to give your name to the reference person at the front desk.

You may have copies made of most of our materials. Those wishing to copy book materials may use a coin-operated copier located on the first floor in the Reserve Room. Archival materials must be copied by staff members and in some cases a curator’s permission may be required. The Collection has a microfilm room with nine readers and one reader-printer for making copies from microfilm. All copies are 10 cents per page.

Our policy of free Interlibrary Loan requests had to be discontinued this winter due to escalating costs. Our charge is now $1.00 per title for requests from within the state, and $2.00 for those from out-of-state.

As many of you know, we do handle requests that are mailed or telephoned in to the Collection. This may take some time in many cases as we do not have any full-time reference people. We can handle only those requests that are very specific in nature. If you require someone to research for you we will send, on request, a list of professional genealogists in the area who will research your subject for a fee. The Library is also equipped to serve handicapped people.

I hope this article has been helpful to you and that we will be seeing many of the Upper Ohio Valley genealogists here in the future.
THE MERGER OF RITCHIETOWN

By

Kenneth D. Johnston

The Frazier farm located above the Nail City brewery is bounded north by Tridelphia, Webster, and Union districts, south and east by Marshall, and west by the Ohio River. This area was a favored resort of the "red skins" because of wild turkeys and naturally inviting for the early white sportsman. A fissure in rock was found by John S. Garvin upon which a stone thrown into the fissure alighting cannot be heard. This might be the Lead mine so frequently referred to as having yielded the Indian's that metal in an almost perfect state. The earliest settlers here were: James Wheat, Milton Miller, Samuel Ott, Frederick Schultz, Robert Barlow, John Ritchie, and Samuel Spriggs. Ritchie and Spriggs possessed a considerable portion of the property around 1835, and they laid out a number of lots recording them as Sprigg's and Ritchie's additions to South Wheeling. Each immediately put up a house, and the utmost inducements were offered to parties to similarly invest, which resulted in residences springing up on the most eligible sites, one by one. Thus that end of our present city assumed the name of Ritchietown after one of its founders.

In 1837, Mr. Plunkett and Miller led the introduction of manufacturing into the district by starting a glassworks. Other enterprises followed along with many settlements and school accommodations became a matter for serious consideration. A small, but suitable public structure went up after securing the gift of a site from the directors of the Merchants and Mechanics Bank and raising a building fund of $300.00.

Observing the growing importance of Ritchietown to the district and the county road having been removed up from the river bank to what is now known as Chapline Street, the Marshall and Ohio County Plank Road Company, in 1850, erected a toll gate. Its upper end was on the boundary line of the city of Wheeling, and the lower end in Ritchie district. It stood just south of Caldwell's run, and was in operation some ten or twelve years. The major portion of which was attended by Joseph Cowell.

So early as 1850, the good people of Ritchie district realizing their growth as a community, saw no reason why they should not secure incorporation as a town. The necessary steps were taken, and prosecuted with a will, resulting in the framing of an "Act of Legislature, Virginian," passed March 31, 1851, in which the following clause appeared:

"Be it enacted by the general Assembly of Virginia, that the inhabitants of so much of the county of Ohio as is within the bounds of the plot of Ritchietown and Largr and their successors, shall be and hereby made a body politic and corporate by the name and style of The Town of South Wheeling." 4

After establishing South Wheeling a flood occurred in 1852; which swelled and extended the Ohio River to a depth of six feet on the road known as Chapline Street. On which occasion the inhabitants received a shocking fright as they stood helpless as the residences of Mr. Shanks, Wilson, and several others were washed away. The flood ended and a highly important feature was starting up, the La Belle Mills. La Belle Mills brought manufacturing into the area. Other operations came back into the area like Wheat and Son's tannery in 1863-64, which was wiped out in the flood. Captain Wilson built steam boats here at his saw mill in 1854-55, at the foot of twenty-fifth street. This mill was later converted into Rosenberg's stone mill. James Richards operated a bowl works but his business ceased soon after his death. G.E. and H. Caldwell operated a saw mill in 1857, but later that year the mill was reduced to ashes.

As a whole the residents of Ritchietown got along prosperously, yet they appeared to have been doomed to vicissitudes, for we find by an ordinance, passed in the fall of 1870, in response to a petition from a large number of residents, that Ritchietown now known as "The Town of South Wheeling" will be brought into the city of Wheeling and called "The Eighth Ward." The range of the Eighth Ward as found in the Minute Record 1871-1874, for the City of Wheeling is as follows:

"Resolved that the boundaries of the Eighth Ward shall be as follows, beginning at the Ohio River near the mouth of Caldwell's run running east along the Caldwell line to where it crosses the Eastern boundary line of the city, hence running south along the Eastern boundary of the city to the Marshall County line. Hence running west along the Marshall County line to the Ohio River, hence up the Ohio River to the place of beginning."

And the rights of the citizens of the Eighth Ward are as found in Laws and Ordinances of 1891:

ACTS OF THE LEGISLATURE, WEST VIRGINIAN

Middle and South Wheeling established:

"If it be in and for a city containing a population of more than twenty thousand inhabitants, the power of taxation shall not exceed two percent on the assessed value of property for state purposes, beyond a tax for railroad purposes, which may be imposed for that object, not exceeding three percent of such value." xvi

The rights and property of South Wheeling, vested in the city of Wheeling:

"The month, taxes, real estate, rights in action, demands of property
of whatever nature, and the papers, documents and records belong-
ing to the said town of South Wheeling are hereby transferred to
and vested in the city of Wheeling, as its successor as fully and
effectually as they now do in said town.” lxiii3

Trustees appointed, their power:
“If it be in a city, town or village containing a population of more
than ten thousand inhabitants and less than twenty thousand inhab-
habitants, the rate shall not exceed one dollar and fifty cents on every
one hundred dollar value of property, ascertained by the last assess-
ment for state and county purposes.” xv2

What a change for an area in a little over fifty years. The Frazier
farm has grown to become the Eighth Ward in the city of Wheeling, West
Virginia. Did John Ritchie and Samuel Spriggs dream that their lots
would one day become a part of Wheeling? Who knows? One thing is for
sure man by nature builds settlements to protect himself from danger.
But here danger never seems to elude him. The “red skins” were driven
away and his growth lead to the development of Ritchietown and then
the incorporation as the Town of South Wheeling. The flood of 1852,
showed that danger still lurked in the hillsides. Business development
emerged and died and to gain added insurance from these vicissitudes
the merger of Ritchietown was inevitable.

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2. Ibid.
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