

Using the West Virginia Vital Research Records Search

What is the West Virginia Vital Research Records Search?

Through a collaborative effort between the West Virginia State Archives and the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU), selected West Virginia county birth, death and marriage records, and statewide death records to place online via the West Virginia Archives and History Web site in a viewable, downloadable and searchable format. Births were first reported in the counties in Virginia/West Virginia in 1853, but marriages were reported from the county's formation. In 1917, the West Virginia Department of Health Vital Registration office began collecting the county reports of births and deaths and they issued official state certificates. In some cases, you will find birth records with dates earlier than 1853. These are delayed records accepted by the clerks or are errors. A group of 1920 death records (#4501-5000) are not available since the certificate book is lost.

This is an on-going project with more records being added all the time. This site provides digitized images of death certificates for 1917 - 1956. Six counties (Calhoun, Gilmer, Hardy, Harrison, Mineral and Pendleton) are included in the initial database for birth, death and marriage records and include all records microfilmed for those counties. Note that these records go as late as 1930; however, later additions to the data base will only include birth records that are past the 100-year mark and death records that pass the 50-year mark. As records pass these age limits, they will be added each year. Additional counties' records have been and will be added as the records are indexed. When you go to the search page for each record type, there is an information column that gives the county and the years for the records included.

The images are currently very large and require that you scroll up, down, right and left to view the entire image and they are working to make the images a more convenient size.

Accessing and Searching the West Virginia Vital Research Records

- Go to http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_select.aspx
- Select the desired record type – **birth**, **death**, or **marriage** and the **Search** window will open. For example, the **Search** window for the births is shown below.

Search Birth Records...

Last Name	First Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Gender: <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	
County: <input type="text" value="All"/>	
Year of Birth: <input type="text" value="All"/> +/- <input type="text" value="Exact"/>	
Search Type: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Exact/Pattern Match <input type="radio"/> Similar	
Records per Page: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 25 <input type="radio"/> 50 <input type="radio"/> 100	
<input type="button" value="Search"/>	<input type="button" value="Cancel"/>

- Fill in the search box(es) as desired.
 - ▶ Use * to search for zero or more characters before or after the search term.
Examples: Jef* returns Jeff, Jeffrey, Jefferson, etc. Ste*en returns Steven, Stephen, etc. *alton returns Dalton, Walton, etc. Using a * before and after a search term will find that term anywhere in the field.
 - ▶ Use _ to replace a single character with a wildcard character.
Examples: J_n returns Jan, Jen, Jon, etc. _an returns Dan, Ian, Jan etc. Je_ returns Jeb, Jed, Jen, etc. Multiple _ may be used.
 - ▶ Last names may include both maiden and married names
- Set the drop-down menus if you want to limit the search, change the number of records returned per page, etc.
- Click the **Search** button or press **<enter>**.

- The **Search Results** window will open. For example, see the **Birth Search Results** window shown below.

Birth Records Search Results...

Click the name to view details about the record, or click the image size to view the record image. Please note that there may be multiple records on each image.

4 Records Found

Result #	Name	Birth Date	County	Image Size
1	Malissa C. Franks	5 Jan 1853	Harrison	841 Kb
2	Margaret Franks	5 Jan 1853	Harrison	868 Kb
3	Irena Elizabeth Franks	22 Jun 1856	Harrison	587 Kb
4	Josiah Lee Franks	15 Nov 1860	Harrison	682 Kb

- Click on the **Name** link to view the details about the record or click the **Image Size** link to view the record's image. Note: There may be multiple records on a page.