



**West Virginia Folklife Program Announces Release of its Digital Archives Collection,
Housed at West Virginia University Libraries**

**For Immediate Release
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**Contact: Emily Hilliard 304.346.8500
hilliard@wvhumanities.org**

Charleston—The West Virginia Folklife Program, the National Endowment for the Arts-supported state folklife program and a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, is thrilled to announce that its digital archives collection, The West Virginia Folklife Collection, is now accessible online through the West Virginia and Regional History Center at West Virginia University Libraries. The collection may be viewed at <https://wvfolklife.lib.wvu.edu/>

The original, ongoing collection consists of nearly 2,500 documentary items generated by folklife fieldwork and programs conducted by the West Virginia Folklife Program beginning November 2015. Those items include unique primary source material such as field-recorded interviews and other audio recordings, transcriptions, photo and video documentation, ephemera, and some material objects documenting the vernacular culture, beliefs, occupational skills, and expressive culture of contemporary tradition bearers, folk and traditional artists, and cultural communities across West Virginia.

Field research from which this collection draws focuses on the traditional and vernacular music, dance, crafts, foodways, and material culture of the people of West Virginia, from long settled to new immigrant communities. Highlights and sub-collections include materials documenting the foodways and community celebrations of the Randolph County Swiss community of Helvetia, members of the Scotts Run Community Museum in Monongalia County, the 2018 West Virginia Teachers' Strike, Summers County collector Jim Costa's collection of 18th and 19th century farm tools and objects of rural life, and participants in the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program. You can learn more about artists, practitioners, and communities featured in the collection here: <https://wvfolklife.lib.wvu.edu/featured>

The goal of The West Virginia Folklife Collection is to create a publicly accessible archive of past, current, and future West Virginia folklife, folk and traditional arts, and cultural heritage. Archival materials were collected by West Virginia state folklorist and other West Virginia Humanities Council staff, and other partners and contracted documentarians in collaboration with the documented individuals and communities. The West Virginia Folklife Program wishes to thank the Director and Assistant Director of

the West Virginia and Regional History Center John Cuthbert and Lori Hostuttler, respectively, and other Library staff for their support of this initiative.

The West Virginia Folklife Program is a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Folk & Traditional Arts Program. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia's vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions.

For more information on the archival collection and West Virginia Folklife Program, visit <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/> and wvfolklife.org or contact Emily Hilliard at hilliard@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council is a nonprofit corporation governed by a board of directors whose members are drawn from all parts of West Virginia. It is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.