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### 0137: Bertha Julia Steinbach Filson papers, 1899-1976

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**Bertha Steinbach Filson**  
**Papers, 1899-1976**

**Accession Number: 1976/06.0137**



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Huntington, West Virginia  
1979

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**BERTHA STEINBACH FILSON PAPERS, 1899-1976**

Accession Number: 137

Processed By: Cora P. Teel

Date Completed: May 1979

Location: Special Collections Department

(Word processed register typed by Amanda Quait, 1998)

This collection was the gift of Eleanor Filson McComb and was received 20 June 1976.

Linear feet of shelf space: 1

Literary rights: assigned to Marshall University

## CONTENT AND SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION

A major portion of the Bertha Filson papers consists of certificates of award, membership, and certification--all pertaining to Mrs. Filson's activities as an educator, churchwoman, and Marshall University alumna. Correspondence includes letters from Lawrence J. Corbly, president of Marshall College from 1896 until 1915; George M. Ford, state superintendent of schools; and James Leftwich, a former student of Mrs. Filson's who became president of the F. W. Woolworth Company.

There are also some compositions written by Mrs. Filson for an English class, many of which describe persons, places or events in Mason County, West Virginia. A large collection of newspaper clippings relate to the collapse of the Silver Bridge at Point Pleasant, West Virginia, in 1967. Also included is a typescript of the minutes of the first meeting of the Joint Board of Education of Mason, Waggoner, and Hartford Joint High School District in 1925; Wahama High School was formed as a result of this meeting.

## **BERTHA JULIA STEINBACH FILSON, 1883-1976**

Bertha Julia Steinbach was born 19 August 1883 in Middleport, Ohio, the daughter of William and Sophia Munch Steinbach. In 1891, the family moved to Point Pleasant, West Virginia, where Bertha Steinbach completed her education in the public schools. In 1899, she entered Marshall College Normal School; she received her diploma in 1901 and returned to Point Pleasant to teach. In 1916, she married William C. Filson. The couple had one daughter, Eleanor.

In 1923, Mrs. Filson was elected superintendent of Mason County schools, and was instrumental in the consolidation of Waggoner, Hartford, and Mason Districts into a joint high school district. She served two four-year terms as superintendent, was president of the West Virginia Education Association in 1926, and became a life member in the National Education Association in 1929.

After the death of her husband in 1931, she continued to teach and began attending summer sessions at Marshall College, Morris Harvey College, West Virginia University, and Ohio University, from which latter institution she received the bachelor of science degree in education in 1939. After a brief retirement, she returned to the classroom, continuing to teach until 1967. After retirement, she continued to tutor in her home.

She was active in the Mason County Retired School Employees Association, Presbyterian Women of the Church, Order of the Eastern Star, Association of Retarded Children, and Alpha Delta Kappa. In 1972, at the age of 89, she was elected the first president of the Mason-Gallia Chapter of the Marshall University Alumni Association, and was given the Marshall University Alumni Association Community Achievement award in 1975, less than a year before her death on 8 February 1976.

**Bertha Steinbach Filson Papers, 1899-1976**

<b>Bx 1</b>	<b>Papers</b>	<b>37 Fd</b>
<b>Fd 1</b>	Letter sent (draft), 1971 Oct. 21  Pencil draft of a letter to John Barker, president of Marshall University, expressing her regret at not being able to attend his inauguration ceremony.	2 items
<b>Fd 2</b>	Letters received, 1928-1974; undated  1941 Feb. 18, Dunbar, W. Va.: Letter from George M. Ford, former state superintendent of schools, expressing a desire to see Mrs. Filson and her daughter Eleanor. He comments on the war in Europe and America's role in the outcome.  1957 Feb. 25, New York City: Letter from James Leftwich, president of the F. W. Woolworth Company, congratulating Mrs. Filson on her long teaching career.	14 items
<b>Fd 3</b>	Letters sent, L. J. Corbly, 1899, 1932  1899 Oct. 10, Huntington, W. Va.: Letter from the president of Marshall College to William Steinbach reporting on Bertha's adjustment to school.	2 items
<b>Fd 4</b>	Anonymous letter sent, 1826 April 22  At head of letter: "Virginia University." Comments on appointment of Leonard Fredericksburg as professor of law, on his severe discipline, and on visits to Monticello.	1 item
<b>Fd 5</b>	Composition (holograph)  Written for English 101C: a description of Mason County Route 19, circa 1936.	1 item
<b>Fd 6</b>	Composition (holograph)  Written for English 101C: an anecdote about Rice Green, a Mason County black man.	1 item
<b>Fd 7</b>	Composition (holograph)  Written for English 101C: an anecdote about a hobo.	1 item

**Bx 1**, continued

<b>Fd 8</b>	Composition (typescript)	1 item
	“From the inside looking out,” a description of the effects of a major flood on a community.	
<b>Fd 9</b>	Composition (typescript)	1 item
	“The first shall be the last,” a narrative of Mrs. Filson’s first attempt to produce a school play.	
<b>Fd 10</b>	Physician’s report, 1942	1 item
<b>Fd 11</b>	Withholding statement, 1948	1 item
<b>Fd 12</b>	Contracts, 1940, 1946	2 items
<b>Fd 13</b>	Documents, Ohio University, 1939 (photoreproductions)	3 items
<b>Fd 14</b>	Certificates of authorization and experience, 1941, 1942	2 items
<b>Fd 15</b>	Certificates of election, 1922-1926	2 items
<b>Fd 16</b>	Certificates, professional, 1901-1963	10 items
<b>Fd 17</b>	Certificates, fraternal, community service, 1947-1976	6 items
<b>Fd 18</b>	Certificates, church, 1947-1971	3 items
<b>Fd 19</b>	Declamation, Honorary Life Membership (typescript) Women of the Church, Point Pleasant, W. Va. Presbyterian Church	1 item
<b>Fd 20</b>	Minutes (typescript): First meeting of the Joint Board of Education, Mason, Waggoner, and Hartford Joint High School District, 1925	1 item
<b>Fd 21</b>	Levy rates and valuation of property of the school districts, Mason County, 1930-1931	1 item
<b>Fd 22</b>	Programs, 1915-1975	9 items
<b>Fd 23</b>	Cards, tickets, ca. 1922-1941; undated	3 items

**Bx 1**, continued

- Fd 24** West Virginia Education Association Past Presidents, 1963 2 items
- Fd 25** *Sunshine*, vol. 1, no. 7 (Jan. 19, 1923): Newsletter of Central Grade School, Point Pleasant, W. Va. 1 item
- Fd 26** *Tu-Endie-Wei*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Sept. 1948): Student newspaper of Point Pleasant High School 1 item
- Fd 27** Jesse Stuart items from scrapbook (photoreproductions) 4 items
- Includes letter dated 1940 April 4, from Riverton, Kentucky, explaining why Mr. Stuart can't come to Point Pleasant to speak.
- Fd 28** News release and letter, Marshall University Alumni Association, 1972, 1975 2 items
- Fd 29** Clippings, James Leftwich, 1954, 1956 2 items
- Articles about Leftwich, a former student of Mrs. Filson's; inscribed by Leftwich.
- Fd 30** Pamphlets, 1952 2 items
- Sermons by Massey M. Heltzel.
- Fd 31** Newspaper clippings, 1976 2 items
- Obituary and eulogy for Mrs. Filson.
- Fd 32** Newspaper clippings, 1925-1975; undated 31 items
- Concerning Mrs. Filson.
- Fd 33** Newspaper clippings, 1967 20 items
- Silver Bridge collapse.
- Fd 34** Newspaper, 1969 1 item
- "Silver Memorial Bridge Dedication Edition," Point Pleasant *Register*, December 15.
- Fd 35** Newspaper, 1969 1 item



“Silver Bridge Memorial Section,” [Athens] *Sunday Messenger*, December 14. 6

**Fd 36** Newspaper clippings, 1939, 1968; undated 4 items

**Fd 37** Photographs, 1972, 1975 4 items

**Bx 2** Plaques

1. West Virginia Education Association Past President, 1928
2. Marshall University Alumni Association Alumnus Community Achievement Award, 1975
3. ...Mason County Education Association, November 18, 1965
4. Mason-Gallia Chapter, Marshall University Alumni Association...1972-1974
5. Programme of Exercises, by the Pupils of the Public Schools, Point Pleasant, West Virginia, [ca. 1890; laminated paper on wood]

Oversized items in Map Case:

Photographs and certificates 3 items