

# Archives



## REPRESENTING THE PAST

Summer 2019

### House Biographical Directory: Historical Research with the House Archives!

The House Archives Historical Biographical Directory provides biographical and bibliographical information about Representatives who served in the PA House. Currently, information on Members who served from 1875 to the present is available. We are currently researching Members who served between 1859 and 1874.

The information we gather on former Members includes their birth/death years and locations, education, military service, careers, and public offices held prior to House service, as well as any jobs or public offices held afterwards. We also look for information on their families — particularly for those who have relatives that also held public office.

Form MAGO-41 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Military Affairs		RECORD of BURIAL PLACE of VETERAN	BERKS County
NAME BALTHASER, Wayne L.		DATE OF BIRTH 14 MAR 09	DATE OF DEATH 20 AUG 93
VETERAN OF World War II		SERVED IN AIR FORCE ( ) COAST GUARD ( ) MARINE ( ) ARMY (X) NAVY ( ) CORPS ( )	
DATES OF SERVICE 11 JAN 41 - 19 JUN 45	ORGANIZATION (S) 30th Chemical Decont. Co.	RANK 1st SGT	
CEMETERY OR PLACE OF INTERMENT	NAME St. John's		
	LOCATION Windsor Township		
LOCATION OF GRAVE IN CEMETERY SECTION Cem. 2 RANGE 305 LOT NO. D GRAVE NO. 4		HEADSTONE	
INFORMATION GIVEN BY Widow		REMARKS Erma M. Balthaser 427 Franklin St. Hamburg, PA 19526	
DATE 9-9-1993			

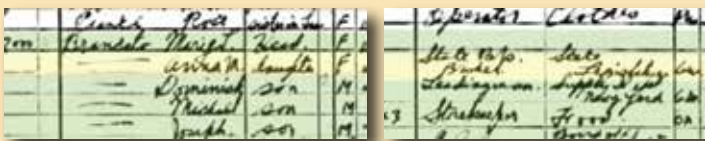
Above: This burial card for Representative Wayne L. Balthaser (Berks, 1959-1960), shows details of his World War II service. These cards, which are still created by the Bureau of Veterans Affairs, are available to Pennsylvania residents free of charge through Ancestry.com and the State Archives.



When researching, sources such as the Pennsylvania Manual or the House Legislative Journal can provide some basic information. However, to get a better picture of the lives and issues that were important to long-ago or hard-to-find Members, we often turn to reputable online resources. Here are a few tips about the sources we use to help you conduct your own research:

### Ancestry.com & Genealogical Resources

Through using this popular genealogical website, we can find many useful pieces of information about former Members. Materials we often access include census records,



Above: These clippings from the 1940 U.S. Federal Census show Representative Anna Brancato's (Philadelphia, 1933-1946) occupation as a "State Rep." and "Broker." The Census also shows information about where she was living, her level of education, and approximate year of birth.

military service records, death certificates, marriage records, city directories, school yearbooks, and occasionally even family trees constructed by descendants of Members. These kinds of documents can lead us to information about Members' families, careers, and possible relocations.

## Research Continued

### Newspapers

Newspapers often provide the most compelling information about Members. Many of the “big moments” in anyone’s life can often be found in local press, including weddings, birth announcements, graduations, and deaths. For Members, we can often find information on campaigning, noteworthy legislation, and issues that were of importance to them and their district.

Researching through newspapers no longer requires a trip to a local library. Many newspapers have been digitized and are available to view online. One website we utilize with great success is Newspapers.com, but other websites are available as well.

### Make a call!

Occasionally, we find ourselves with gaps in our research — or little information at all on a former Member. In those cases, we often try calling a local historical society or library in their home district to provide us with some leads. Reaching out to a church or cemetery we know is associated with a Member can also sometimes lead to useful information.

### We can help!

The House Archives conducts research for the Biographical Directory and numerous other projects. We also assist members of the general public with their research inquiries. If you would like information on a former Member, take a look at our website or contact us at 717-783-3866 or records@pabmc.net.

### Mrs. Ella Adams Is Summoned By Death Active Local Resident Dies Suddenly

Mrs. Ella Collier Adams, widow of Attorney John B. Adams, died suddenly in Uniontown Hospital, at 6:30 Thursday evening, September 14, 1944.

Long prominent in civic, religious and political circles, Mrs. Adams was one of the city's most widely known residents. She had attended meetings this week and her death is a distinct shock to the district.

Born in Georges township, August 7, 1865, Mrs. Adams was a daughter of John B. and Anna Laidley Collier. She was a graduate of Beaver college.

A member of the Third Presbyterian church, she served as teacher of the Bethany Sunday school class. She was a member of Great Meadows Chapter, Daughters of American Revolution, Travel Club, Civic League and of the Board of Directors, Uniontown Library.

Mrs. Adams served two terms as a member of the State Legislature, and was the first woman to serve on the Republican county committee, acting as first vice chairman for 14 years. Prior to her marriage, she was employed in the Uniontown postoffice 15 years.

Surviving are one sister, Mrs. Margaret Eddy, Salem, O., and one brother, John J. Collier, Mt. Clemens, Mich. Three nieces and four nephews also survive.

Friends will be received in the home, 210 West Main street, after 7 o'clock tonight. Funeral arrangements in charge of A. D. Ferguson, are incomplete.



Above: Representative Ella Louella Collier Adams, (Fayette, 1927-1930).

Left: Obituaries often have lots of useful information. This obit notes where Representative Adams was born, attended school, was employed, her House service, as well as much more. Source: The Morning Herald, Uniontown, September 15, 1944, page 1.



Above: John Charles Messenger, (Washington, 1879-1880).

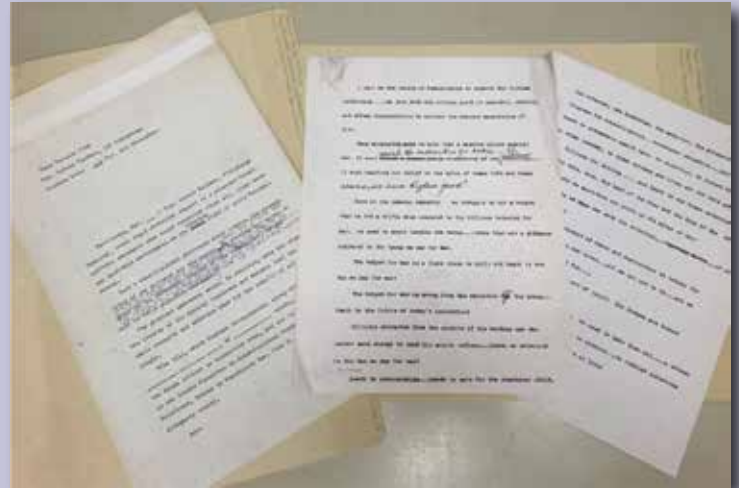
Hon. John C. Messenger, of St. Cloud, had thirty cans of fruit stolen from his spring house on Tuesday night. He didn't swear, because he is a Presbyterian, but the fruit is gone, all the same.

Above: No Swearing in this House: Local newspapers often can provide unusual (and sometimes comical) information. Source: Monongabala Valley Republican, October 20, 1887, page 3.

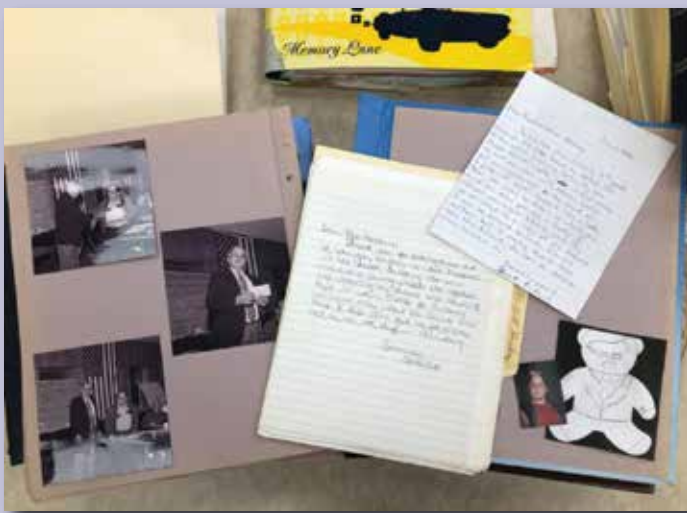
# Recent additions to our collections

The House Archives has recently received collections of personal papers and objects from current and former Members and staff. This list highlights a few:

- Sixth annual commemoration of PA Farmers photograph, 1920, from David R. Millard, R – Columbia, 2004-present
- Stephen Bloom, R – Cumberland, 2011-2018
- Eli Evankovich, R – Allegheny/Armstrong/Westmoreland, 2011-2018
- Gregory C. Fajt, D – Allegheny, 1991-1996
- Kenneth S. Halverson, R – Somerset, 1967-1980
- Arthur D. Hershey, R – Chester/Lancaster 1983-2008



*Above: Late 1960s press release and speech from the Gerald Kaufman Collection*



*Above: Scrapbooks and correspondence from the Arthur D. Hershey Collection*

- Gerald Kaufman, D – Allegheny, 1967-1972
- David J. Mayernik, D – Allegheny, 1983-2002
- T. Mark Mustio, R – Allegheny, 2003-2018
- H. Sheldon Parker, R – Allegheny, 1967-1978
- Lawrence Roberts, D – Fayette, 1993-2006
- Eric Roe, R – Chester, 2017-2018
- Richard Saccone, R – Allegheny/Washington, 2011-2018
- Will F. Tallman, R – Adams/Cumberland/York, 2009-2018
- John Taylor, R – Philadelphia, 1985-2018
- Bernard T. O'Neill, R – Bucks, 2003-2018
- William Wachob, D – Clearfield/Elk, 1979-1984

## Something Extra Special...

This summer, the House Archives welcomed a shipment from a descendent of a 19th century Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Justine Farr, the great granddaughter of Representative John R. Farr (Lackawanna, 1891-1900), donated over 20 books to the House Archives regarding general Pennsylvania history, historic maps, House-authored reports, and other materials. In addition to these rare and historic publications, Farr also donated two gavels used by her great grandfather during his Speakership.



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## Outreach: Keeping Up with the House Archives



In June, the House Archives staff had the opportunity to attend “The Association of Retired Legislators” annual luncheon. Our staff connected with former legislators and staff and provided them with information on the types of materials we accept for donation. If you have materials you think may be suitable for donation, please contact us to learn more about what the House Archives can do for you!



## Be sure to follow the House Archives on social media!



Instagram:  
[@pahousearchives](https://www.instagram.com/pahousearchives)

- Learn fun trivia and House History!
- Explore information about oral histories, Member biographies, newsletters, internship information, and more!
- See new projects as they unfold!



Blogger:  
[@OnSecondConsideration](https://www.onsecondconsideration.com/)



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