About the Roane County Historical Society

General Interest

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In 1977 a Roane County Historical Society was formed and a charter was adopted. However, the society failed to gain much community support and was soon dissolved. The revival of the county's former genealogical society began in June 1993. Sandra Booth Worcester, Arlene Boggess and Terry Cummings, and other local residents, decided to form an organization dedicated to the history and genealogy of Roane County. From that small group of genealogists the society has grown to a current membership of 170. The main objective of the society is to create and build interest in preserving and collecting accurate historical and genealogical records of Roane County and its' people. The society also endeavors to publish and distribute related materials.

Since the society was organized in June 1993, it has printed a quarterly newsletter, compiled, copied and printed the Roane County Birth Records from 1856 through 1960's, printed two volumes of ancestor charts, erected a historical marker at the Spencer State Hospital cemetery, reprinted the Roane County West Virginia Family History 1989, published four updated volumes of cemetery readings, reprinted a Citizens Telephone Co. Directory (circa 1930), and published a book researched and written by member, Terry Cummings, entitled Roane County Blue and Gray; An Index of Soldiers of The Civil War.

In July 1995 the Roane County Historical Society hosted its first genealogical fair. It was an overwhelming success and is now an annual event that takes place in September. The fair, which requires no admission fee, features a variety of sources for both novice and experienced ancestor hunters. The main focus of the fair is to allow individuals to share their genealogy research with others. Everyone with an interest in their family roots is encouraged to bring charts, records, photographs, cemetery information and the like to share with others. Publications are available for sale by many vendors who participate in this annual event.

The Roane County Library graciously shares the family history room of the library with the Roane County Historical Society. All genealogical books and materials, both donated and purchased by both the Roane County Library and the Roane County Historical Society, can be found in the library. By working together, the library and society have been able to add a large number of new research books and make them available to Roane County researchers. The society recently purchased four new bookcases for the room and they too will soon be filled. Both the society and library strive to preserve Roane County?s past for future generations.

The society newsletter, The Roane County Journal, is published four times a year and contains various items of historical and genealogical interest, unidentified photos, family Bible records, journals, diaries, queries, obituaries, cemetery records, death records, census records, library acquisitions, society publications for sale, and articles submitted by members.

In June 2001, the Roane County Historical Society hosted a historic photo copying session in collaboration with the West Virginia State Archives, a division of the state Cultural and History

Department of the Arts and Education. State Archives and History Director, Fred Armstrong, recorded information about each photo as photographer, Ed Hicks made copies of the photos. Twenty six people participated in the two day event and 450 old Roane County photos were preserved. Both the historical society and the archives will have copies of the photos printed on a contact sheet as well as a numbered list including the information gathered by Armstrong. After photos and information have been processed, copies will be available at a cost of $7 for an 8x10. Another photo coping session is being discussed as many could not participate in the previous one.