

# Harry T. Leeper, Collector, Papers A&M 0251

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1882-1952



## Title Statement

Harry T. Leeper, Collector, Papers A&M 0251

**Author:** Staff of the West Virginia & Regional History Center

## Publication Statement

**Publisher:** West Virginia and Regional History Center

1549 University Ave.  
P.O. Box 6069  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6069  
Business Number: 304-293-3536  
wvrhcref@westvirginia.libanswers.com  
URL: <https://wvrhc.lib.wvu.edu>



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**Creation:** This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-08-30 07:35:28 -0400.

**Language Usage:** Description is written in: English, Latin script.

**Descriptive Rules:** Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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**Unit ID**

A&M 0251

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**Unit ID**

/repositories/2/resources/2644

**Unit Date**

1882-1952

**Language**

English .

**Creator**

Leeper, Harry T.

**Creator**

Leeper, Thomas M.

**Extent**

2.0 Linear Feet 2 ft. (1 record carton, 15 in.; 1 document case, 5 in.; 1 large flat storage box, 4 in.)

**Physical Location**

West Virginia and Regional History Center / West Virginia University / 1549 University Avenue / P.O. Box 6069 / Morgantown, WV 26506-6069 / Phone: 304-293-3536 / URL: <https://wvrhc.lib.wvu.edu/>

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West Virginia and Regional History Center

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**Preferred Citation**

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## Biographical / Historical

Thomas M. Leeper, 1858-1950, prominent person and local historian, was born in Monongah-Thoburn, Marion County, West Virginia. Leeper was a descendant of an early Revolutionary War veteran, Nathaniel Cochran, 1757-1808, whose life and captivity by indigenous peoples Leeper recorded and gave speeches about. He taught in the Marion County school system for eleven years after graduating from Fairmont Normal School and was employed for 45 years in Consolidated Coal's store. He was considered to be an expert on Marion County history, particularly Monongah and Grant districts. He was also a genealogist and worked on many family histories from requests.

Leeper was married to Martha Nye and they had two children. He was a member of the West Fork Baptist Church, the I.O.O.F. lodge, the Modern Woodsmen, the Marion County Historical Society, and the Monongah Good Will Club. He died at his home in Thoburn after a long period of failing health.

(from Thomas Leeper's death notice in The Fairmont (W.Va.) Times, 1950 August 1)

## Scope and Contents

Diaries of Thomas M. Leeper, 1886-1950 (Box 1). Samuel Leeper wrote a few of the first entries, and some family members wrote some of the last entries documenting Thomas Leeper's last days. Subjects in the diaries include family life; work life; weather; encounters with visitors, friends, and neighbors; and travels. Counties traveled include Calhoun, Clay, Lewis, Harrison, Marion, Wirt and more. Inserts in the diaries include receipts, penciled sketches, and other paraphernalia. Added entry at the end of the 1950 diary: "Thomas M. Leeper died 3:30 the morning of July 31-1950, funeral August 2 in Methodist Church, preacher-Rev. McKinney."

In addition to the diaries, the collection includes a Leeper family history and Thomas Leeper's autobiography (Box 2). The narrative of Nathaniel Cochrane's life as told to T. Leeper's grandmother, Mary Cochran Bowman, and in T. Leeper's handwriting. Also, a typescript manuscript of Nathaniel Cochrane's biography tracing his roots to Ireland; an account of the Confederate William Jones' Raid from Harrisburg to Marion County; and history of Monongah, Monongah High School, and Thoburn School District.

Other travel accounts are included, most significantly a fifty-three-page narrative of a trip on a raft in 1882 from Washington, Marion County, West Virginia to McKeesport, Pennsylvania, by way of the West Fork and Monongahela Rivers. The sketch was written by Thos. M. Leeper from notes taken on the journey. There are descriptions of the raft's construction, of the towns and geographical features seen, and comments on the early history of the area through which the group passed. Also included are extracts from Leeper's diary in July 1888, during a flood of the West Fork River in Marion County.

Other trips included are to Canada (1935), and Washington, D.C. (undated) with some brief historical notes. An essay on fishing, another raft trip, and various other writings.

There are three scrapbooks (Box 3) of newspaper clippings of obituaries, local history, current events, and other miscellany: 1944-1946, and Thomas Leeper's certificate from the Bureau of Mines for first aid training, and a handwritten history of Marion County; 1950-1952 including Thomas Leeper's obituary and funeral program; 1946-1948, local history, current events, etc.

## **Related A&M Collections**

251, 348

## **Keywords**

Canada

Marion County (W. Va.)

McKeesport (Pa.)

Diaries and journals.

Education

Frontier and pioneer life

Rivers and river valleys.

Travel accounts.

West Fork River (W. Va.)

Floods

Cochran, Nathaniel.

Leeper, Harry T.

Leeper, Sam.

Leeper, Thomas M.

Leeper family