

A Publication of the West Virginia Humanities Council

Abe Lincoln creates a state:

Emancipating West Virginia

Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer will deliver the annual Betsy K. McCreight Lecture in the Humanities at 7:30 p.m., October 17, at the Culture Center in Charleston. Holzer will discuss President Abraham Lincoln's role in the creation of West Virginia, and he recently answered questions on that subject from Humanities Council staff. The McCreight Lecture is free and open to the public, with a reception and book-signing to follow.

How did President Lincoln approach decision making?

Lincoln was a slow, deliberate decision maker. He took his time, made his own deadlines, consulted as many people as he could, read divergent opinions, and then pulled the trigger when he was finally ready—by which time so many people were demanding action that he seemed to be following, not leading. He particularly liked to ask his Cabinet for legal opinions, which he solicited and read. I guess the best quote comes from the man himself: “I walk slowly, but I never walk backward.” When he brought his big foot down, he didn’t go back again.

This is the way Lincoln approached two of the biggest, most precedent-setting decisions of his presidency: emancipation and West Virginia statehood.

What was the situation facing Lincoln at the time West Virginia sought statehood?

When decision time came for West Virginia statehood, things could not have been more desperate. The Union had just lost a huge and humiliating battle at Fredericksburg. The Republicans had done very badly in the off-year Congressional and state elections. Lincoln liked to lead from strength. In December 1862, he couldn’t. The fact that he moved forward anyway is a testament to his political courage.

Did Lincoln have any personal knowledge of Western Virginia?

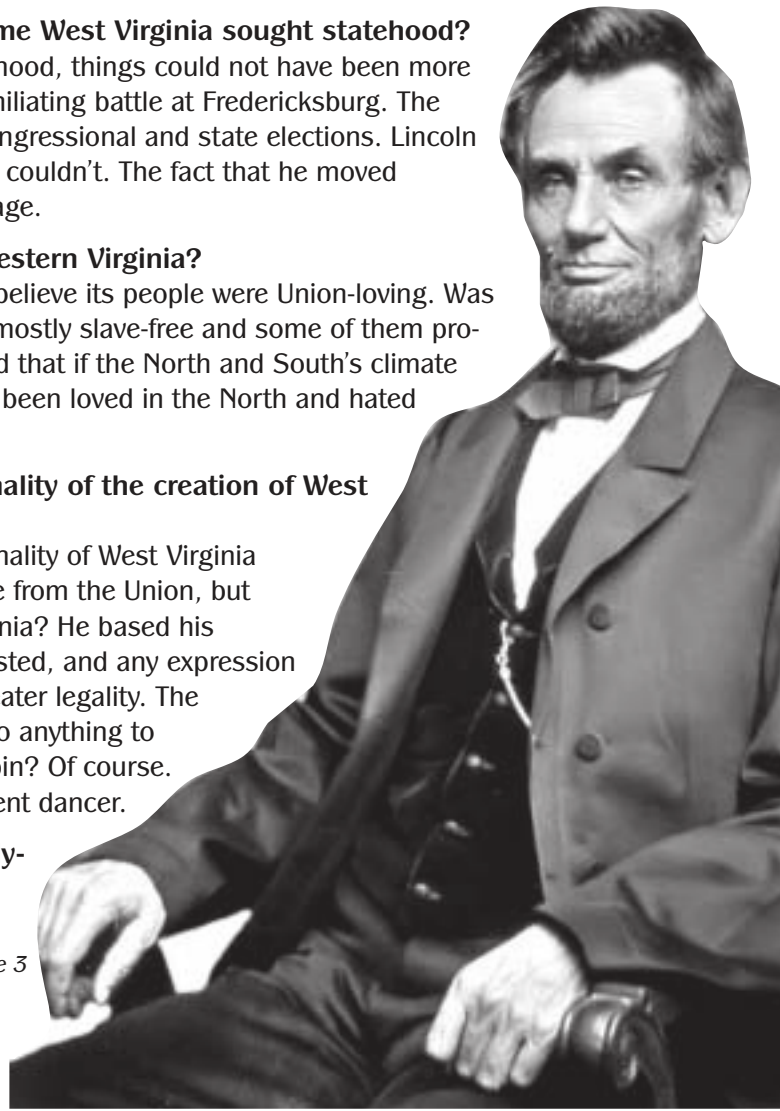
He didn’t know much personally, just enough to believe its people were Union-loving. Was he surprised that Virginia’s western counties were mostly slave-free and some of them pro-emancipation? Not particularly. Lincoln always said that if the North and South’s climate and topography were reversed, slavery would have been loved in the North and hated in the South.

What was Lincoln’s opinion on the constitutionality of the creation of West Virginia?

Lincoln sort of talked himself into the constitutionality of West Virginia statehood. How to say that Virginia couldn’t secede from the Union, but Virginia’s western counties could secede from Virginia? He based his conclusions on the fact that a state of rebellion existed, and any expression of loyalty represented the greater normalcy, the greater legality. The whole concept of Virginia’s secession was illegal, so anything to correct it was fine. Did he dance on the head of a pin? Of course. But when it came to politics, Lincoln was an excellent dancer.

President Lincoln’s former law partner and body-guard, Ward Hill Lamon, lived and is buried in West Virginia. What can you tell us about that

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Will you help?

Each year the Humanities Council provides hundreds of thousands of dollars to programs across West Virginia, often approaching a full million and sometimes more than that. Counting the match required for Council grants, the total investment in our state's cultural life conservatively amounts to two million dollars annually.

Humanities dollars go to small rural organizations, recently including the Northern Webster County Improvement Council and the Capon Bridge Ruritans, as well as top-tier institutions such as Charleston's Clay Center and the Huntington Museum of Art. Last year, we provided 295 grants and programs in 48 counties.

Our ability to support worthy programs is being jeopardized by continued cuts in funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities. The NEH is our national affiliate and a major source of revenue. Thankfully, we have other income, including much-appreciated funds from the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts. We've worked hard to diversify resources, and I'm proud to say that most of our money now comes from public and private sources within our own state.

Still, the NEH provides the single biggest chunk of our funding, more than 40 percent. When the NEH sneezes we get pneumonia, as the saying goes, and the NEH has been sneezing a lot lately. Congress has cut its funding three years in a row, totaling a full 20 percent as compared to 2010 levels. Another cut is threatened for 2014.

As always, we count on the help of our friends. We hope supporters of the Humanities Council will do the following:

Ask your Representative and Senators to increase funding to the National Endowment for the Humanities. They all have websites, and it's easy to leave a message. You may also reach them through www.congressweb.com/FSHC. The U.S. Mail still works just fine, as well, and the address is simple: Write your Representative at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington 20515, and your Senators at U.S. Senate, Washington 20510.

And please consider making a contribution to the Humanities Council, or an additional gift if you are already among our much-valued supporters. Your gift is tax deductible, and it truly makes a difference.

— Thank you, Ken Sullivan

People & Mountains is published three times a year by the West Virginia Humanities Council.

A state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the West Virginia Humanities Council serves West Virginia through grants and direct programs in the humanities.

We welcome letters, comments, and financial contributions. Please address all correspondence to West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, WV 25301 or sonis@wvhumanities.org.

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We welcome nominations to the Humanities Council board of directors. Nominees should be West Virginia residents with an interest in the humanities and willing to serve without monetary compensation. Please send the name, contact information and brief biographical details to wvhuman@wvhumanities.org.

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relationship?

Lamon was a real favorite of Lincoln's, fun to be with and unquestionably loyal. Even a good singer, and Lincoln loved his vocalizing and banjo playing. Lamon's finest moments came when he served as master of ceremonies at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863, and got to introduce his good friend to the audience. Unfortunately, Lamon left us the story that Lincoln believed his Gettysburg Address was a "flat failure." By the time Lincoln got home he had learned that his speech had actually been a success.

Lamon's great regret was going off on a mission to Richmond after Appomattox. As a result, he was absent from Washington the night Lincoln was assassinated. He always believed, with enormous regret and guilt, that had he been in the city, he either would have prevented Lincoln from going to the theater on April 14, 1865, or at least have accompanied him—and, surely, have saved his life.

Where do you rank Lincoln among our nation's presidents?

Historians consistently rank Lincoln as number one among presidents, and I couldn't agree more. He gave the Union new life and brought the end of its greatest stain—slavery. He was a sublime political writer and a brilliant politician. He rose from poverty, proving the American dream was real and setting an example for future presidents of scant means, from U. S. Grant to Barack Obama. And it was almost as if he died so the nation might live—the perfect end to the perfect résumé.

What's sad is that popular presidential preference polls have diverged lately—the favorites among the people now tend to be Reagan or Kennedy, incredibly enough. I attribute a bit of that to television and film—it's just that presidents who move and talk are more vivid in this media age than those frozen in black-and-white still images, their records notwithstanding. And more than a little blame goes to history education—or the lack of it. Maybe the Spielberg movie will help.

Tell us about working on Steven Spielberg's

Lincoln movie.

I loved the experience working as a script consultant to the film, limited as that role was. I got to meet with Steven and screenwriter Tony Kushner early on, and of course got to go to some wonderful events. Daniel Day-Lewis actually said to me, "You've been with me every step of the way," though I never set foot on the set. I consider myself a knowledgeable enough

historian, but in this case I got to work with true geniuses.

Spielberg has a vision of history that's more sweeping, yet more nuanced, than any histori-

an's; Kushner is an American Shakespeare; and Daniel Day-Lewis is, or was, Lincoln—from the eyes to the voice to the slouch to the moods. I've never seen such a transformation, and never enjoyed a project more.

What do you think are the best popular depictions of Lincoln?

Well, Spielberg found Daniel Day-Lewis, and he's certainly the best ever—totally vanishing into Lincoln and transforming himself. Raymond Massey looked plenty like Lincoln, and Henry Fonda was terrific as a young Lincoln in 1940 and 1939, respectively. But Hal Holbrook and my friend Sam Waterston were also brilliant in their respective miniseries in the '70s and '80s. These are all extraordinarily talented men—I think the popular culture has been blessed with what they've left us on film and video.

But the Spielberg film, to me, rises above all—not only because of the majesty and intimacy that he somehow combined to such effect, but because he focused on a part of the story so long neglected—the political fight for the 13th Amendment.

Why does Abraham Lincoln matter today?

I believe that Lincoln matters most of all because American presidents since his time, regardless of party, have aspired to be like him—to adapt him, to adopt him, to steal him, to fall back on him for what they imagine, sometimes delusionally, would be his blessing for their own policies.

Harold Holzer was appointed chairman of the U.S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission by President Bill Clinton in 2001, and in 2008 he was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President George W. Bush.

"Lincoln sort of talked himself into the constitutionality of West Virginia statehood."

History Rolls On: Harold Holzer's upcoming lecture is the latest of many Humanities Council events commemorating the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War and West Virginia statehood. Earlier programs included several other Lincoln scholars; a two-day bus tour; nearly 50 Sesquicentennial Speaker talks, a John Brown symposium carried by C-Span Book TV; appearances by Drew Gilpin Faust, James Robertson and other top historians; dozens of living history presentations; book discussions in several counties; and visits to 17 communities by our *Born of Rebellion* exhibit. The Sesquicentennial continues through 2015.



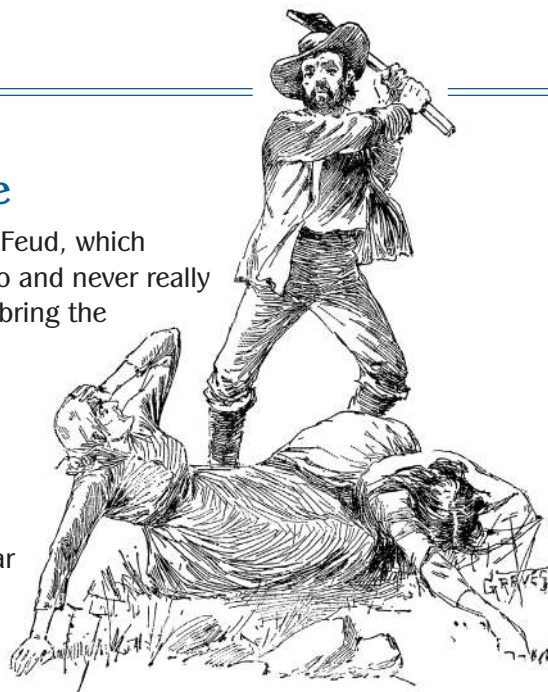
Hatfields and McCoys to tour the state

Among West Virginia's great stories is the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, which captured the American imagination more than a century ago and never really let go. The Humanities Council began work this summer to bring the feud into our popular traveling exhibit series.

The Hatfields and McCoys lived and died in a tragic Tug Fork drama whose subplots included elements as grand as the Civil War and as trivial as a stolen pig, as well as family loyalty, doomed romance and yellow journalism. The battle was fought in the hills, in the courtroom, and in the governor's offices of two states. Nobody won though the war spirit ultimately abated, as patriarch Devil Anse Hatfield put it. Council staff will work with historian Stan Bumgardner and Professor Eve Faulkes and her WVU graphic arts students to put feud history into exhibit form.

Meanwhile, *Born of Rebellion*, our exhibit on the creation of West Virginia, is winding up a busy Sesquicentennial year. Since last December it has never been off the road, and soon it will have traveled to 17 locations statewide. *Born of Rebellion* may be seen at the Morgantown History Museum through September 30. It will visit the Hancock County Museum in New Cumberland, October 6 to October 20, the Brooke County Museum in Wellsburg from October 28 to November 8, and the City of Philippi from November 18 to December 6.

The Hatfield-McCoy exhibit will begin touring in summer 2014. Booking inquiries will be accepted after the first of the year, and may be sent to payne@wvhumanities.org.



Feud scene from An American Vendetta, 1889.



Last fall Marshall University was awarded a Humanities Council Teacher Institute grant for a 2013 summer program to improve writing in the classroom. Elementary and secondary school teachers from Kanawha, Putnam, Wayne, Braxton, Wyoming, Lincoln, Mason, and Wood counties took part. Participants met with First Lady Joanne Tomblin (left) following a workshop at the Culture Center in Charleston. The Humanities Council offers Teacher Institute

grants to eligible institutions each year. For more information contact grants administrator Amy Saunders at saunders@wvhumanities.org.

Pearl Buck Archives

The Pocahontas County Historical Society has received a Humanities Council grant for its Pearl S. Buck Birthplace archives project. The first American woman to receive the Nobel Prize (for literature in 1938), and one of only two West Virginians to receive a Nobel, Pearl Sydenstricker Buck was born in Hillsboro in 1892. Her birthplace is home to an archive of historic materials that are being digitized to make them available to the public for the first time. The materials include audio recordings with Buck's sister, as well as family photos and documents, along with photographs of property renovations and the 1974 opening of the Birthplace Museum. There are also architectural drawings and records from the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. The online archive will be available in April 2014 at www.pocahontaspreservation.org.

Buck at the Greenbrier, 1970.



The West Virginia Humanities Council gratefully acknowledges support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Office of the West Virginia Secretary of Education and the Arts; and foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout the Mountain State and beyond.

Briefs

The Council's **History Alive** program brings historical characters to life through well-researched portrayals by talented presenters. Proposals for new characters are being accepted until February 1, 2014. Contact program officer Mark Payne at payne@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500, or apply directly at www.wvhumanities.org.

Our **prize-winning** ways continue with recent awards for Humanities Council grant projects. *Frank Kearns: American Correspondent* won a regional Emmy in the historical documentary category from the Ohio Valley Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences at its 49th annual awards ceremony in Cincinnati on July 20. And the West Virginia Botanic Garden received a merit award from the American Association for State and Local History for its wayside exhibit on the history of the Morgantown reservoir and water system.

Marshall University's **Amicus Curiae Lecture Series**, supported by a Humanities Council grant, presents New York Law School professor emeritus James F. Simon, who will discuss his book *FDR and Chief Justice Hughes* on October 8. On November 5, Louis Michael Seidman, professor of constitutional law at Georgetown University, addresses the role the Constitution should play in contemporary Supreme Court decision making. The lectures take place at 7:00 p.m. at Marshall's Foundation Hall in Huntington.

An American Vendetta, a firsthand account of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, has been reissued by Woodland Press of Logan. Opening with the words, "I have been away in Murderland," this collection of articles by New York newspaper reporter T. C. Crawford sensationalized the Tug Valley family war and helped to create the enduring image of the violent, irresponsible hillbilly. It was first published as a book in 1889. The attractive new paperback edition is available for \$19.95 at www.woodlandpress.com or by calling (304)752-7152.

Tell it to the Monkey! Every five years the West Virginia Humanities Council undergoes a process of self-evaluation at the request of the National Endowment for the Humanities, our national affiliate and single biggest funding source. We need your help with this important job. Please share your thoughts on the Humanities Council by taking a brief survey at SurveyMonkey, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WVHC>. You'll also find a survey link at www.wvhumanities.org.

West Virginia Classics, a collaborative publishing venture of the Humanities Council and West Virginia University Press, brings back our state's classic books in handsome

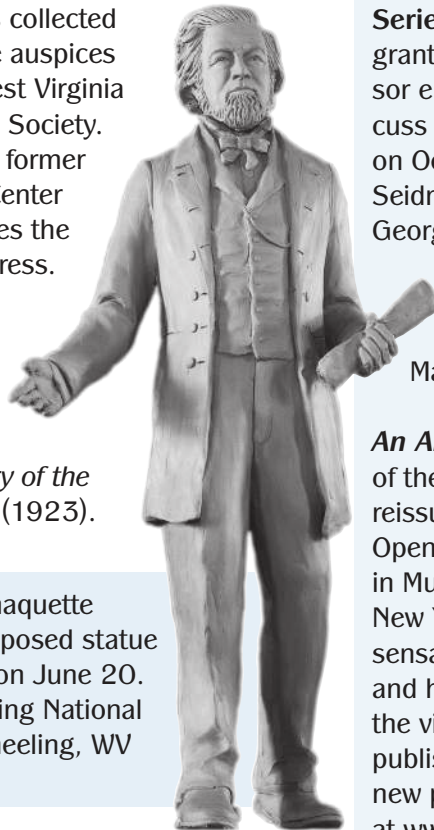
new editions. The fourth book in the Classics series, *Folk-Songs of the South* by West Virginia University professor John Harrington Cox, is scheduled for release in September.

First published in 1925 by Harvard University Press, *Folk-Songs* is a treasure trove of over 200 West Virginia ballads and folk tunes collected under the auspices of the West Virginia Folk-Lore Society.

Alan Jabbour, the former director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, provides the new introduction. Visit www.wvupress.com or call 1-866-WVU-PRES.

Other West Virginia Classics include *West Virginia* by J.R. Dodge (1865), *The Shenandoah* by Julia Davis (1945), and the West Virginia edition of *The History of the American Negro* by A. B. Caldwell (1923).

Wheeling citizens unveiled the maquette (scale model, at right) for the proposed statue of Governor Francis H. Pierpont on June 20. Send your contribution to Wheeling National Heritage Area, P.O. Box 350, Wheeling, WV 26003.



Play ball!

Dear Humanities Council:

The Ripley High School Baseball Team would like to thank the West Virginia Humanities Council for the recent visit by Gene "Babe Ruth" Worthington of the *History Alive* program. Arriving in a 1928 vintage convertible, he made an appearance at our game to throw out the honorary first pitch.

—The Ripley High School Baseball Team and Coaches

Babe Ruth, Harriet Tubman, and other historic figures are available under our History Alive program. Contact payne@wvhumanities.org.

Grant Categories

The Humanities Council welcomes applications in the following grant categories:

Major Grants (\$20,000 maximum) support humanities events: symposiums, conferences, exhibits, lectures.

Due: Sept. 1, Feb. 1

Minigrants (\$1,500 maximum) support small projects, single events, or planning/consultation.

Due: June 1, Aug. 1, *Oct. 1, *Dec. 1, Feb. 1

Fellowships (\$2,500) support research and writing projects for humanities faculty and independent scholars.

Due: Feb. 1

Media Grants (\$20,000 maximum) support the production of electronic or film materials, or a newspaper series.

Due: Sept. 1

Publication Grants (\$20,000 maximum) support the production phase of a completed manuscript by recognized nonprofit and academic presses.

Due: Sept. 1

Teacher Institute Grants (\$25,000 maximum) are available to colleges and universities and support summer seminars for secondary and elementary teachers.

Due: Sept. 1

* Approaching Deadlines!

Visit www.wvhumanities.org for applications and guidelines, or call (304)346-8500.



Visiting boy scouts excavate a West Virginia frontier fort site. Photo by Kim McBride.

We dig forts

With the support of a major grant from the Humanities Council, the Summers County Historic Landmarks Commission and archeologists Kim and Stephen McBride began the excavation of McCoy's Fort in July. Western Virginia frontier forts were a vital part of a defensive system that successfully maintained and expanded the line of settlement during the bloody period between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. Standing since 1769, McCoy's Fort is located near Williamsburg down a one-lane country road on what is now an active sheep farm.

The Williamsburg District Historical Foundation began prepping the site in May and June. Endangered by the deterioration of a barn that had been built around it, the old fort had to be dismantled before the archeology began. The log structure had been altered for the storage of hay and other purposes during its many years inside the barn, and it is hoped that reconstruction will bring the fort closer to its original appearance.

From July 17 to July 23, excavation got under way with the help of volunteers from the Historical Foundation and other archeologists on the McBrides' team. The National Boy Scout Jamboree was going on in neighboring Fayette County, and each day up to 50 scouts took part, some from as far away as Hawaii. The scouts, archeologists and volunteers dug, scraped and sifted Greenbrier Valley dirt to expose the wooden structure of the fort as well as china fragments, arrowheads, and metal tacks and nails among other artifacts.

The McBrides have spent more than 20 years getting West Virginians involved in excavating frontier forts. They will continue the McCoy's Fort project this fall with a two-day workshop on frontier forts, historic preservation issues, and archeology for teachers from Greenbrier, Pocahontas and Summers counties. The workshop will prepare the educators to write lesson plans and teach frontier history and the early settlement of West Virginia. Following the workshop, West Virginia Studies teachers from Greenbrier County middle schools will bring 400 eighth-grade students to McCoy's Fort over four days. The students will learn the techniques used to excavate frontier forts and how to interpret artifacts. The McBrides will continue excavating the fort this fall.

The project will provide the necessary information to nominate McCoy's Fort to the National Register of Historic Places. A roadside pull-off and kiosk are planned for the fort, as well as a booklet to be distributed through the West Virginia Library Commission, illustrating and documenting the primary research, family history, and archeology at McCoy's Fort. Reconstruction is still in the planning stages.



For more information on McCoy's Fort and other aspects of West Virginia's frontier history visit *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia* at www.wvencyclopedia.org.

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BrickStreet Insurance is among the public-spirited corporations and foundations supporting Humanities Council programs this year. The company recently signed on to sponsor *History Alive*. The popular living history program offers first-person portrayals of historic figures such as Mary Todd Lincoln, Stonewall Jackson, and Mark Twain to community organizations, libraries,



and schools throughout West Virginia. "Whether you sponsor a single presentation with your tax deductible donation of \$300, or a series as BrickStreet has generously done, you are truly helping us to keep history alive in West Virginia," development director Michelle Walker said.

Walker also cited the community and corporate support the Council received when it brought Sir Neil Cossons for a lecture tour for National Historic Preservation Month in May. Cossons is the former Chairman of English Heritage, the group responsible for hundreds of historical and archeological sites in England. His lectures at the Jefferson County Courthouse in Charles Town, West Virginia University in Morgantown, and West Virginia Independence Hall in Wheeling were supported through contributions from the Elizabeth Stifel Kline Foundation, West Virginia University, Mr. and Mrs. G. Ogden Nutting, Jefferson Distributing, John Allen Jr., West Virginia Division of Culture and History, and the Bavarian Inn.

Cut your taxes. Donors of \$500 or more to the Humanities Council qualify for a 50 percent Neighborhood Investment Program tax credit which may be applied directly to their state taxes. Contact Michelle Walker at walker@wvhumanities.org.

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150 and just beginning!

It is the poet laureate's business to celebrate West Virginia, and during this Sesquicentennial season, the new guy rose to the occasion. Appointed to his post by Governor Tomblin just last year, Marc Harshman performed his first major commission as poet laureate during West Virginia's 150th birthday celebration on June 20, 2013. He read his commemorative poem, "A Song for West Virginia," during anniversary events in his hometown of Wheeling and at the State Capitol in Charleston with the Governor present. Harshman has since read his poem on several other occasions in different parts of the state.

"A Song for West Virginia" is a grand, long work, suitable to the glorious event it memorializes. Harshman understands that the poet has a duty to speak up. His Sesquicentennial poem does not shy away from acknowledging problems that any West Virginian would recognize, but he properly brings "A Song for West Virginia" to a fine, ringing conclusion. We offer these closing stanzas here, and you may find the entire text at e-WV, West Virginia's online encyclopedia (www.wvencyclopedia.org/sidebars/143).

"One hundred fifty years and hundreds more to come . . . think of it! Take up the patterns of those who've given us their lives. Take up the patches of this history quilt, this dream-flagged quilt. Wave it high and walk proud these crumpled folds and crags of mountain and valley, these green, rolling hills. And let no man haul it away, no coward with a bankroll buy us out, no circus fast-talkers take what's ours.

"And what a dream—still ours, still new, just beginning. Again, that bell, again those trumpets, fiddles, drums, hands together, how sweet the sound. Let us clap! Let us sing! And though we know, President Kennedy, that the sun, indeed, does not always shine here in West Virginia, you were right—these, our people, always do, and always will. West Virginia . . . you are my home, our home. Forever may you sing, and forever may you shine."

"A Song for West Virginia" was commissioned by the Wheeling National Heritage Area. It is available in limited quantities in a special keepsake edition as a finely crafted 16-page booklet. You may order it for \$20 from the West Virginia Book Company by calling 1-888-982-7472 or visiting www.wvbookco.com. Copies are also available from the National Heritage Area at (304)232-3087 or from info@wheelingheritage.org.

The Capitol dressed up for the big party. Photo by Michael Keller.

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