

A Publication of the West Virginia Humanities Council

The distinguished historian John Alexander Williams will speak on the subject of West Virginia's 150th anniversary at the 1836 MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston at 2:00 pm on Sunday, June 23, as part of the Humanities Council Little Lecture series. In this excerpt from his speech draft, Williams reflects on past anniversary celebrations and on his personal experience of the 1963 state centennial.

John Alexander Williams on the Sesquicentennial:

“Mixed Results with Birthdays”

West Virginia has had mixed results with birthdays. The semicentennial of 1913 coincided with the outbreaks of coalfield violence now known as the Mine Wars.

There were also record-breaking floods on the Ohio River, which inundated much of Wheeling that spring, but the city dried out in time for the official celebration on June 19-20. It featured a “Jubilee Song,” a poem written by the daughter of Francis H. Pierpont, a ball, an airplane show, some motorcycle races, plus of course speeches.

But the speeches of labor agitator Mother Jones dominated the news from West Virginia that spring, which she spent under guard in the Kanawha Valley. Released from custody on May 8, she returned in June with a brace of U.S. senators who staged an official investigation into the state's labor unrest. There was some worry that Governor Hatfield, beset with these problems and concerned that West Virginia was acquiring an “unsavory reputation,” might not make it up to Wheeling for the birthday party, but he did.

Nonetheless the semicentennial era yielded some solid achievements. In 1909 the first director of the West Virginia Department of Archives and History, Virgil A. Lewis, published a documentary record of the Wheeling statehood conventions. James M. Callaghan of WVU's history department produced an official semicentennial history in 1913. Most influential were the views of his colleague, Charles H. Ambler, who had published *Sectionalism in Virginia* in 1907.

The problem for Ambler was that West Virginia lacked “authentic heroes” whose examples induced “a wholesome state pride.” He set out to remedy this with biographies of Pierpont and Waitman T. Willey, the leading state makers, and an archives—the West Virginia and Regional History Collection—was established in *(Continued on page 3)*



West Virginia Independence Hall in Wheeling is our state's birthplace. Photo by Michael Keller.

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2013

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Seven Sisters



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We Do Windows

For those of us who work in offices, nowadays the word “windows” commonly refers to the software on our computers.

As for windows of the other kind, with glass in them and the whole wide world outside—not so common. And don’t even think about windows that open.

Well, we’re in the history business at the Humanities Council, and windows of the old-fashioned kind were among the things that attracted us to our current headquarters in one of Charleston’s oldest buildings. This place has them, big time: Sash windows in several sizes, glass transoms, casements of at least two types, French doors and glass single doors, leaded sidelights surrounding the front entrance, and one solitary fanlight at the very top of the house.

Mostly, we have double-hung sash windows—56 of them, and not one worked when we came here. As in a lot of old houses, our windows had been painted shut and sometimes nailed shut, with the sash cords broken or deliberately cut.

We learned in a 2011 collaboration with Preservation Alliance of West Virginia that restoring double-hung windows to working order is surprisingly simple. Basically, one opens the hidden tracks to get at the counterweights, then reattaches the cords. Sanding and repainting the sashes eases their passage up and down.

The Preservation Alliance demo project restored six of our windows, and we recently secured much-appreciated funds from the state Historic Preservation Office for 24 more.

We value the rehab work for practical as well as historic reasons. Functional sash windows make this house more authentic to its time period, and the ventilation improves livability. We know that preservation may be challenged from a “green” standpoint, but believe that the best strategy is to accept old buildings for what they are. Our MacFarland-Hubbard House is going on 180 years old. There’s no doubt that modern buildings are better insulated and make better use of materials. But the environmental costs of building this place, in terms of trees cut and other resources expended, were absorbed ages ago. That provides an enormous advantage over anything built new, however efficient it may be.

And the old timers knew a thing or two with their adjustable windows, overhanging eaves and massing of masonry, what we now call passive technology. Our windows project moves us a step backwards, in that direction. As for how it all affects daily energy consumption, we’ll see when the utility bills arrive.

In the meantime, we’ll enjoy the fresh air and the satisfying sound of lead weights rumbling once again in their hidden chambers.

— Ken Sullivan



Nikkita Carin of Allegheny Restoration at work.

Michael Keller

The Board of Directors welcomes two new members elected at the Council’s recent meeting at Tamarack in Beckley: Susan Landis of Daniels, executive director of the Beckley Area Foundation, and Kevin Barksdale of Barboursville, a professor of American history at Marshall University. We thank departing board members George I. “Gib” Brown of Clarksburg; Julie R. Gurtis and Stephen M. Hopta, both of Charleston; and Sharon H. Rowe of Lewisburg for their years of service.

Continued from page 1

the WVU library to nourish future scholarship. Festus P. Summers, who succeeded Ambler as the leading West Virginia historian, nurtured this collection and in his own books opened research frontiers in the post-statehood era.

West Virginia's centennial in 1963 also took place in difficult circumstances. While the official celebration focused on the future, national attention focused on Appalachian poverty. Much of this grew out of the presidential primary campaign of 1960, when West Virginia had played a critical role in John F. Kennedy's victory. As president, Kennedy gave the keynote address in the official celebration in Charleston, which took place in a rainstorm. "The sun doesn't always shine in West Virginia but the people always do," he said, a comment that nicely captured the ambiguity of the centennial moment.

The 1963 centennial had a significant impact on my own career plans. After spending my junior year at Tulane studying in England, I went to Yale to study British intellectual history—writers like Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, and Lytton Strachey, painters like Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, the economist John Maynard Keynes and his wife, the ballerina Lydia Lopokova, who as Baroness Keynes, a frail but elegant widow, could still occasionally be seen walking in Bloomsbury Square when I lived there.

But the national attention paid to Appalachian poverty caught up with me. One day at a gas station near the Yale campus in New Haven, an earnest couple noticed the West Virginia tags on

my 1949 Plymouth and came over to greet me, welcoming me to New England and hoping that I would find a better life there. The next day I put a Yale sticker in the back window of my car. But as a poor graduate student I couldn't afford to register the car in Connecticut, and therein lies another tale. When a summer research assistantship fell through

“ . . . an earnest couple noticed the West Virginia tags on my Plymouth and came over to greet me, welcoming me to New England and hoping that I would find a better life there.”

in June 1963, I didn't renew my West Virginia tags, which in those days always expired on June 30. Previous West Virginia tags had disclosed the expiration date right on the plate but since this was the centennial year, my expired tag had only the phrase "Centennial 1963." I thought I could get away with not renewing it until I found a job, which I eventually did in the Yale library.

During that time I became acutely aware of the few cars in New Haven that had West Virginia tags. There were four. One was my Plymouth. One was a Jaguar convertible with a Huntington dealer's license frame enclosing its new 1963-64 tag. A third West Virginia plate was on a junk car in a weedy vacant lot.

The fourth was the car of a Boone County family that moved next door to my apartment. The father was an unemployed miner from Seth who found work in New Haven's booming construction sector. His wife and children joined him in a small apartment above a vacant storefront. Our street was run-down but salvageable from an

urban renewal standpoint, too good to be bulldozed, but it was no place for kids who had recently been free to roam the woods of a West Virginia hillside. I felt sorry for those kids; of course, the first thing they said to me was: "Your license plate's expahred."

This experience got me to wondering—why was my home state such a nice place to live but a tough place to make a living? The pursuit of that question turned out to be a lifelong focus on regional but also urban history, since clearly many of the decisions shaping West Virginia's fate were being made in office buildings in some place else's downtown. I discovered Harry Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* that summer. And at the Yale library I was assigned to process a collection of letters from antebellum Southern families that included a large subset from the upper Shenandoah Valley, a collection that documented the ample connections between places east of the present state line and the Greenbrier Valley counties where I and my parents and grandparents grew up.

And so that fall I abandoned Bloomsbury and began my career as a student of West Virginia's past.

In closing his talk, Professor Williams admits that after a lifetime of close study his native state still baffles and intrigues—and that that is part of the attraction of the story: "Perhaps the most consistent aspect of West Virginia history is its ability to puzzle and surprise us. That's what makes it so fascinating, and I hope that the sesquicentennial will deepen that fascination for you as much as the centennial did for me."

For more information on the June 23 Little Lecture, contact Mark Payne at (304) 346-8500 or at payne@wvhumanities.org.

Fellowships Awarded

Humanities Council Fellowships are awarded annually to college faculty and independent scholars for research and writing projects within the humanities. The \$2,500 grants are unique in the Mountain State. The 2013 Humanities Fellows and their subjects are:

Robert J. O'Connor, *Charles Town*, National U.S. Colored Troops Prisoner of War database

Phillip T. Rutherford, *Huntington*, Fighting Fare: Food and the American Serviceman during World War II

Robert Hull, *Buckhannon*, Revolutionary Art: Jefferson, Painting, and Democratic Aesthetics

Brian P. Luskey, *Morgantown*, Soldiers and the Culture of Capitalism during the American Civil War

Kimberly M. Welch, *Morgantown*, People at Law: Local Legal Culture in the Old South

Ari Bryen, *Morgantown*, Law and the Boundaries of Authority in the High Roman Empire

Zelideth Maria Rivas, *Huntington*, Competing Nationalisms of the Japanese in Brazil

The next Fellowships application deadline is February 1, 2014.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park



W.E.B. DuBois, J. R. Clifford (seated and left), and others at Storer College in 1906.

The Storer Story

The Humanities Council recently awarded funds to the Jefferson County Black History Preservation Society for an oral history project documenting the history of Storer College. Established in 1867, Storer College was the first integrated educational institution in West Virginia. During its 88 years more than 7,000 students attended the private college (visit www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/599).

Oral histories, photographs and artifacts will be collected at the Storer alumni gathering on August 1-4 at the former college campus, now owned by the National Park Service in Harpers Ferry. Information and items gathered from the alumni will be stored in the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park archives. The second phase of this project will result in an exhibit and documentary film. For more information contact Bob Wilkinson at (304)532-4233.

With the support of a Humanities Council grant,

the WVU Native American Studies Program will host a volunteer service project, June 2-9, at the state artifact repository at the Grave Creek Mound Archeological Complex in Moundsville. Volunteers will work with the collection staff to catalog artifacts such as stone tools and spear and arrow tips. The project begins with a June 2 visit to Meadowcroft Rockshelter near Avella, Pennsylvania, which is believed to have been inhabited at least 16,000 years ago. The week continues with a nightly film series and an all-day archeological symposium on June 8, all free and open to the public. For more details visit www.nas.wvu.edu, contact Bonniem.Brown@mail.wvu.edu, or call (304)293-4626.



Volunteer Kristine Mueller examines an artifact at Grave Creek.

Bonnie M. Brown

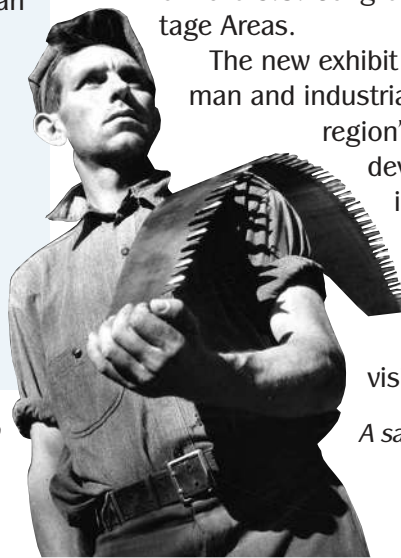
Forest Exhibit

The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, an Elkins group dedicated to the history and culture of the Appalachian forest, has received a Humanities Council grant for an exhibit titled "Discovering the Appalachian Forest." The AFHA territory consists of 16 counties in the eastern region of West Virginia and two counties in western Maryland. The group is now seeking a National Heritage Area designation from the U.S. Congress, hoping to join 49 other National Heritage Areas.

The new exhibit examines the proposed heritage area's human and industrial history, the evolution of local culture, the region's unique natural history, and the historic development of forestry in the area. The exhibit includes 15 large exhibit panels with maps, historic images, and narratives. It will be housed in downtown Elkins at the 1902 Darden Mill building. The exhibit will open by mid-summer. For more information visit www.appalachianforest.us.

A sawyer at Big Knob in 1940.

Monongahela National Forest



Briefs

We welcome two new members to the **Humanities Council Program Committee**, Charlie Delauder of Tyler County and Sally Haynes of Nicholas County. The program committee oversees Council program activities and recommends grants for approval by the board of directors. We thank departing member Bill O'Brien for his years of service.

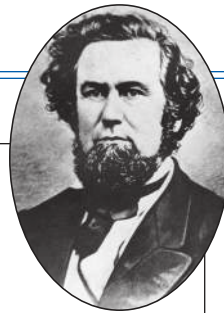
The Frank Kearns: American Correspondent documentary film funded by the Humanities Council has been accepted for satellite distribution to more than 350 public television stations in the U.S., Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Kearns, who died in 1986, was from Morgantown and covered stories in Africa and the Middle East for CBS News before returning to teach journalism at WVU.

The West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey in Morgantown provided \$21,000 to *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia* to expand and upgrade its mapping function. Visitors to the online encyclopedia now have the ability to view stories and content with maps they choose, interact with additional custom maps, and view maps individually or sequentially. Visit *e-WV* at wvencyclopedia.org.

Our popular **John Henry: The Steel Drivin' Man** traveling exhibit—which retired from road touring in July of 2010 after visiting 18 communities statewide—has now found a permanent home at the Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State University. You may visit the virtual exhibit at wvencyclopedia.org.

The Milton Library will honor native son **Breece D'J Pancake** with a June 29 symposium featuring Radford University scholar Grace Edwards as keynote speaker. The day concludes with a walking tour of Milton conducted by childhood friends of

Pancake, whose promising writing career was cut short by his 1979 death. For more information email gloss@cabell.lib.wv.us or call (304)743-6711.



Citizens of Wheeling are raising funds to erect a statue of Francis Harrison Pierpont, the Civil War governor of Virginia who is often called the Father of West Virginia. "It is amazing that after all these years there is not one statue in West Virginia honoring this great man," said Wheeling historian Margaret Brennan. The sculptor selected to create Pierpont's statue will be announced at West Virginia Independence Hall on June 20, West Virginia's 150th birthday. Send your contributions to the Wheeling National Heritage Area at P.O. Box 350, Wheeling, WV 26003, or contact Jeremy Morris at jmorris@wheelingheritage.org.

Welcome Lincoln, Roosevelt and Twain!

Each year our *History Alive* program delivers nearly 200 first-person portrayals of historic figures such as Stonewall Jackson, Babe Ruth, and Harriet Tubman at schools, libraries, parks, museums, and other locations. In 2012, three new characters joined the program: Mary Lincoln, portrayed by JoAnn Peterson of Kingwood; Eleanor Roosevelt, by Patty Cooper of Parkersburg; and Mark Twain (right), by Doug Riley of Tunnelton. More new character auditions will be held in 2014. Learn how to host *History Alive* or how to audition for a new character by contacting Mark Payne at (304) 346-8500 or payne@wvhumanities.org.



Documenting McDowell County

The interactive website *Hollow* launches in McDowell County, Charleston, and Morgantown later this summer, according to project director Elaine McMillion. *Hollow* was created in 2012 with residents

of McDowell County both in front of and behind the camera. A total of 30 short films have been produced for the website. Supported in part by a Humanities Council grant to the West Virginia Filmmakers Guild, *Hollow* combines personal documentary video portraits, photography, soundscapes, social media, interactive data and grassroots mapping. The project was designed to discuss the many stereotypes associated with McDowell County, as well as its population loss and its potential for the future. For more information visit www.hollowthefilm.com.



Elaine McMillion

Fred Rice at the camera.

We get mail!

Dear Humanities Council:

Thank you for supporting the work of Drs. Stephen and Kim McBride regarding West Virginia's frontier forts. I am impressed with the depth and quality of their archeological findings and their ability to share these findings with the public.

C. Sue Miles, Morgantown

We are pleased to report that the McBrides will be excavating at Fort McCoy in Greenbrier County this summer with major funding from the West Virginia Humanities Council. – ed.



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 Deadline!**

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

We welcome new donors Robinson & McElwee PLLC. The Charleston law firm, which also serves clients with offices in Clarksburg and Wheeling, is sponsoring our Spring 2013 Little Lecture series.

Other recent supporters of spring and summer programming include the Elizabeth Stifel Kline Foundation, the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission, Brickstreet Insurance, West Virginia University, Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Nutting, Jefferson Distributing, John Allen Jr., West Virginia Independence Hall of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, and the Bavarian Inn. We rely on contributors statewide to keep the humanities alive and well in West Virginia. Thank you!

Donations November 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013

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Seven Sisters

Charleston's seven antebellum houses will celebrate the Sesquicentennial with a special "Seven Sisters" tour and other events on June 20. The "sisters" and their dates of construction are: Holly Grove Mansion (1815), Colonel Henry Hewitt Wood House (1829), Craik-Patton House (1834), Augustus Ruffner House (1834), MacFarland-Hubbard House (1836), Littlepage Stone Mansion (1845) and Glenwood Estate (1852). These properties span Charleston from the West Side through the East End up to Kanawha City.

Meetings began last year among colleagues from the MacFarland-Hubbard House, Craik-Patton House, Glenwood Estate, and the Charleston Historic Landmarks Commission to raise awareness of these seven houses which were standing when West Virginia became a state. With support from the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission, the houses will receive exterior markings identifying them as Charleston Sesquicentennial Houses. A brochure has been prepared documenting each house's history and location.

On June 20, West Virginia Day and our state's 150th birthday, coordinated open houses will be held at three of the properties: Glenwood from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; MacFarland-Hubbard House from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and Craik-Patton House from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., where Charleston Historic Landmarks Commission chairman Billy Joe Peyton will speak. "The 'Seven Sisters' represent a variety of architectural styles common to the period, but they all share one characteristic—each is an eyewitness to the significant events that have shaped Charleston's history over the past 150 years, including the tumultuous Civil War which resulted in the creation of West Virginia as the thirty-fifth state on June 20, 1863," Peyton notes.



Michael Keller

The 1834 Craik-Patton House, one of the Seven Sisters.

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