

A Publication of the West Virginia Humanities Council



Sally Hemings's children were Apprenticed for Freedom

Centuries-old rumors of Thomas Jefferson's illicit relations with his slave Sally Hemings were finally proven beyond reasonable doubt by DNA testing in the late 1990s. No longer do historians question that the mixed-race couple produced four children who survived to adulthood, in a scandalous relationship that lasted from Hemings's teenage years to Jefferson's death nearly four decades later.

*If basic facts are settled, however, the nature of the enduring liaison remains debatable: Did it come down to serial rape, as one might imagine given the total inequality of the partners—or, at the other extreme, was love part of it? Annette Gordon-Reed explores these issues and others in her Pulitzer-winning book, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, and will discuss them in next month's McCreight Lecture in Charleston.*

Ultimately, Gordon-Reed says that for Hemings the essential point was that children born of the relationship would be set free. This excerpt discusses the peculiar situation of young people born in slavery to the man who was in fact their father and serving an uneasy apprenticeship for the freedom that would eventually be theirs.

Other than running errands when they were small, all the Hemings children remained out of the realm of service and never had the occasion to develop an identity as servants. In another time, and in a different household, Harriet Hemings might have been considered a perfect personal maid for one of Jefferson's numerous granddaughters. Instead, Harriet "learned to spin and weave" in Jefferson's small textile operation, though his overseer remembered that she never worked very hard. Her father gave her something to do that did not automatically signal a subservient status—to him, the outside world and to her and her siblings. After all, his mother and sisters had been spinners. (Historian) Susan Kern has pointed out, in writing of the Jefferson females, that they used spinning primarily as a "polite hobby." Jefferson bought his mother a spinning wheel and sent her wool and cotton for spinning. Certainly the republican revolution that brought forth the cult of republican wife and

motherhood idealized women who produced homespun, lessening their family's dependence upon foreign manufactures. Like all daughters, Harriet probably spent a good deal of her time under her mother's direction learning to sew and to do other domestic tasks. Harriet Hemings was prepared at Monticello to be a successful wife and a mother, which is exactly what she turned out to be.

Jefferson followed a similar, gender-appropriate pattern with his sons. The boys were trained to become the types of workers he admired the most—carpenters and joiners, instead of blacksmiths, gardeners, or hostlers. Jefferson placed all three under the direction of his most trusted artisan, (Sally Hemings's brother) John Hemings, who became a surrogate father to each one. Madison Hemings remembered becoming apprenticed to his uncle at age fourteen, but Jefferson's records indicate that the Hemings brothers began to assist John Hemings sometime after the age of

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Fall
2016

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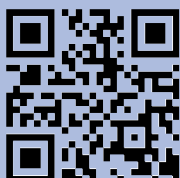
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Next Board Meeting,
October 28, 2016,
Charleston.
Open to the public.

Paint Time

There's a time for everything, so the scriptures say, and here at the historic MacFarland-Hubbard House it's time for paint.

We bought this landmark property for use as Humanities Council headquarters in 1999, thoroughly painting inside and out as part of the overall restoration. We've repainted the interior as necessary through the years, sometimes just touch-up and sometimes whole rooms. Everything inside is in good shape.

The outside is another story. The house still looks great from even a moderate distance and we're not about to let it get to the point of physical deterioration, but after 16 years it's definitely time to repaint the exterior. And unlike inside, exterior painting can't be done on the installment plan—scaffolding and make-ready costs are prohibitively high for piecemeal work. It has to be done all at once.

That takes money, lots of it. It's a big place, and the work must be done to top standards. We're still soliciting bids, but our best estimate is that full exterior painting, bricks and trim, will exceed \$50,000.

And that's why I'm writing, of course, to alert you to the need and request your help. We've relied on the financial support of history-minded West Virginians since first taking custody of this property, and donors have been generous. That's due, I think, to the fact that people respect our commitment to long-term preservation beyond our own use of the place.

Nobody really owns historic property, and certainly as a nonprofit organization set up for public service we don't presume to do so. This house is 180 years old, built in 1836 during Andrew Jackson's time as president. Generations have preceded us here, and we understand that we hold this property essentially in trust for those who follow. That brings serious responsibilities, the most important of which is to maintain the place in sound condition, sustainable for the truly long run. Among other things, that means painting the house in timely fashion.

Won't you please help us get that important job under way, by sending your contribution today? We keep a stewardship fund and are prepared to match you dollar for dollar. And all donations to the West Virginia Humanities Council are tax-deductible.

You may make your contribution in the donor envelope in this *People & Mountains*, indicating that the money is for the house. Or call me at (304) 346-8500, and I'll talk paint just as long as you're willing to listen.

– 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 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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ten.... Neither Beverley nor Madison at ages eleven or twelve would have been expected (or allowed) to do dangerous carpentry work, but carrying their uncle's tools, watching him work, and getting used to the world of carpentry before they actually tried their hand at it made perfect sense. The extremely talented and literate "Johnny" would teach them everything they needed to know.

Still, a Jefferson with working-class sons seems incongruous. Why not train them to be at his level in society? As (historian) Rhys Isaac has observed, class, along with race and status, governed the way Jefferson viewed his children. He had less to be concerned about with Harriet, who as female was not really his counterpart. Great beauty and a genteel manner would be enough for her to attract a decent mate—at almost all levels of society. She could be successful at womanhood with just the rudiments of an education. As for his sons, Jefferson knew they would not grow up to be thought of as gentlemen in the same way that he was thought of as a gentleman. Unlike their grandfather (Sally Hemings's Caucasian father) John Wayles, whose whiteness allowed him to escape the lower class, Beverley, Madison, and Eston were of African origin. Had it been widely known that they were his sons, that part of their heritage would have to be known, too. This man, at the very pinnacle of the social pyramid, had children who had been born at the lowest status in society. The basic imperative was not to bind them to himself, or to try to make them junior versions of the public Thomas Jefferson, but to get them out of that status and, one suspects, he hoped, into a different race.

In the (1813) letter to Francis Gray in which he explained how much white blood it took to turn a black person white, Jefferson declared that freeing a person who was one-eighth black, like his children, would make that person a free white citizen of the United States. There was, of course, no reference to the Hemings children in this letter. It seems highly unlikely, however, that they were far from his mind when he issued the unnecessary (Gray was not interested in questions of U.S. citizenship) and emphatic pronouncement about the effect of emancipation upon people like his offspring. He knew that, when they became adults, he was going to make them the best thing he could think of, free white American citizens.

The historian Peter Onuf has noted how much Jefferson's plan for the emancipation, and then

the colonization, of American slaves resembled his situation with his children, in that it required the separation of parent from child. Jefferson acknowledged the difficulty that posed, but suggested that the great prize to be won—freedom for the generations to come—should not be thwarted out of sentimentality about the relationship between one parent and one child. This may have been a rationalization on his part, a way to explain why he had children who could never belong to him in the way children were supposed to belong to their parents—and why in the end that was still a good thing.

One was to think of what freedom would mean to future generations. As things turned out, Jefferson's calculations were right; his grandchildren who lived as white people used the privilege of whiteness and prospered greatly. We will never know what, if any, emotional toll this deferral of familial connection took on him, Sally Hemings, and their children.

—Annette Gordon-Reed
from *The Hemingses of Monticello*

*"This man, at the very
pinnacle of the social pyramid,
had children who had been
born at the lowest status in
society."*

The McCreight Lecture

Historian Annette Gordon-Reed will present "The Enigma of Sally Hemings: Race, Gender, and Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello" for the

annual McCreight Lecture in the Humanities on Thursday, October 27, at Riddleman Hall on the campus of the University of Charleston. The 7:30 p.m. program is free and open to the public. A book signing will follow. The evening, supported in part by Charleston law firm Bailey & Glasser LLP, will kick off the West Virginia Book Festival again this year.

Gordon-Reed, a National Humanities Medal recipient, is the Charles Warren Professor of American Legal History at Harvard Law School, a professor of history at Harvard University, and formerly a visiting professor at Queen's College, University of Oxford. She won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (2009). Her most recent book (with Peter S. Onuf in 2016) is *"Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination*.



Folklife News



Emily Hilliard continues her folklife fieldwork statewide. In addition to public interest meetings in Charleston, Williamson, and Wheeling, Emily's work as West Virginia's first state folklorist has taken her to Gilmer, Randolph, Kanawha, Jackson, Logan, Mingo, Raleigh, McDowell, Roane, Marshall, Ohio, Brooke, Hancock, Jefferson, Berkeley, and Hampshire counties. She has conducted interviews with artists and tradition bearers, and her Ohio County Public Library class on Appalachian folklore and music drew a large audience of 100.

The Folklife Program has also established a Folklife Hotline, a toll-free (1-844-618-3747) number for West Virginians to share information about local artists, craftspeople, musicians, home cooks, or elders, or to contribute a song, story, or other piece of folklore or tradition. And the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress awarded funds to support a performance earlier this month by Gilmer County ballad singer Phyllis Marks. West Virginia was one of only two states to receive such funds. To learn more about the Humanities Council's West Virginia Folklife Program visit wvhumanities.org.

Folklorist Emily Hilliard recently visited St. Joseph Settlement in Marshall County where the churchyard cemetery is a prominent feature of the community. The old German settlement dates back to the 1850s.

Amicus Assesses Political Season: Marshall University's Amicus Curiae lecture series returns this fall with Alan I. Abramowitz speaking September 29 on "Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton and the Polarized American Electorate." Abramowitz, of Emory University, has predicted the popular vote within two percentage points in every presidential election since 1988. On October 18, James C. Cobb will present "From Truman to Trump: The South and America since World War II." Cobb is Spalding Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Georgia. Amicus Curiae is funded by the Humanities Council, with lectures at 7:00 p.m. in Marshall's Brad D. Smith Foundation Hall. For more information call (304)696-2801.



The Humanities Council is partnering with the National Archives to distribute a special exhibit commemorating the **225th anniversary of the Bill of Rights**. Schools, libraries, museums, senior centers and other similar venues will be provided the educational kiosks at no charge. If your organization wishes to participate, contact Mark Payne at payne@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500.



Benjamin Bensneider

West Virginia Book Festival

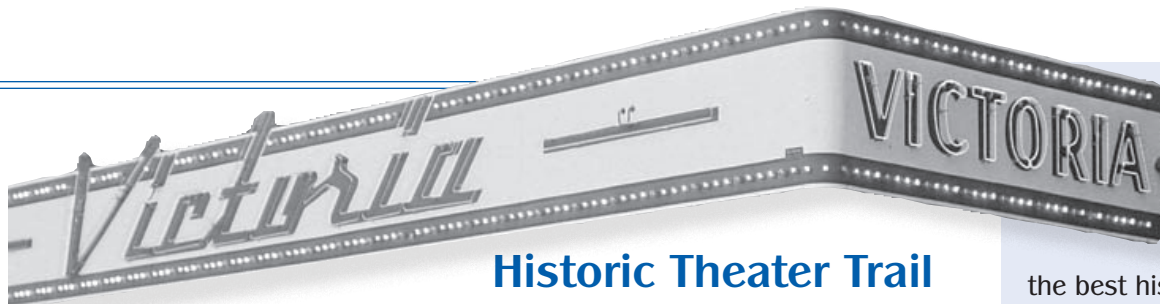
The West Virginia Book Festival will be held October 28-29 at the Charleston Civic Center. This year's authors include among others Erik Larson (left), Sandra Brown, and West Virginia's own Stephen Coonts and Julia Keller. The festival features the Marketplace with more than 60 authors and book-related vendors as well as writing workshops, a Word Play activities area for children, and the Kanawha County Public Library's huge annual used book sale. All events are free.

Erik Larson, whose recent *Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*, is a *New York Times* #1 best seller, will speak at 7:00 p.m. Friday. Sandra Brown's novels include more than 60 best sellers. Stephen Coonts is a Buckhannon native whose bestselling book *Flight of the Intruder* was made into a major motion picture. Huntington native Julia Keller is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who writes the popular Bell Elkins mystery series set in southern West Virginia. Other authors include Ron Rash, Patrick Rothfuss, Maggie Stiefvater, and Matt de la Pena.

The annual McCreight Lecture in the Humanities serves as a special Book Festival preliminary event. On Thursday, October 27, at the University of Charleston, bestselling historian Annette Gordon-Reed will speak on the topic of "The Enigma of Sally Hemings." Visit wvbookfestival.org for complete details.

We congratulate the State Historic Preservation Office as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act on October 16 at the Culture Center in Charleston.





Historic Theater Trail

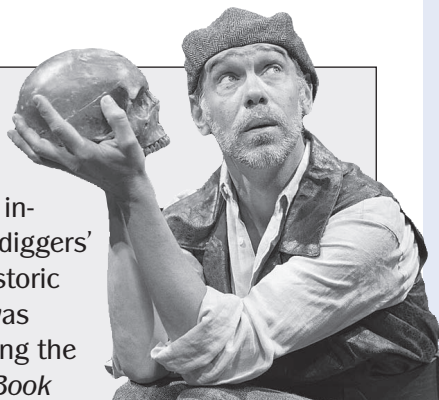
The West Virginia Historic Theater Trail is a heritage tourism initiative of the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia and the State Historic Preservation Office. The goal is to educate the public about the state's historic theaters, and to support their preservation and continued operation.

Six new theaters have been added, and Preservation Alliance is launching a new statewide effort to promote the trail. The project is funded in part by the Humanities Council.

Now in its sixth year, the trail features 29 historic cinemas, drive-ins, and live performance halls, all still open for business. They include the Victoria Theater on Wheeling's Market Street, the Robey Theater in Spencer, and Harrison County's Sunset Drive-In. To learn more about the theaters on the trail, or to find directions, visit wvhistorictheaters.com.

Courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library

Digging Shakespeare. The Humanities Council partnered with Kepner Funeral Homes to sponsor a June 11 performance of an interactive play based on the gravediggers' scene in *Hamlet* at Wheeling's historic Greenwood Cemetery. The play was among local events complementing the traveling exhibit, *First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare*. The Folger Shakespeare Library exhibit visited Oglebay Institute's Mansion Museum as part of a 50-state tour commemorating the 400th anniversary of the 1616 First Folio, the first printed collection of Shakespeare's plays. A rare original copy of the First Folio was included in the Wheeling exhibit.



Veterans web series at film festival. On September 30, "West Virginia Standing Together: After 9/11" kicks off the 2016 West Virginia Filmmakers Festival at 8:10 p.m. at the Elk Theatre on Main Street in Sutton. The post 9/11 episode is the final in a six-part web series *West Virginia Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War* by Lost

Valley Studios, a Charleston media production company formed by veterans Calvin Grimm and Tyler Miller (left). The series, supported by the Humanities Council through special funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, may be viewed at wvhumanities.org. Two additional documentaries produced with Humanities Council support, *Swiss Family Balli* and *George Rashid: The Leper of Pickens*, will also play at the festival. Visit wvfilmmakersfestival.org.

Briefs

West Virginia Public Broadcasting's Jay: A Rockefeller's Journey won

the best historical documentary award at the 52nd Annual Ohio Valley Regional Emmy Awards. *Us & Them* won second place for best podcast at the Public Radio News Directors conference in St. Louis. Humanities Council grants funded both productions.

On October 8, the **Peterstown Heritage Festival** will spotlight Monroe County's Civil War history. The festival is supported by a Humanities Council grant and includes workshops in genealogy and family history, plus reenactors depicting daily life in a Confederate unit in an overnight encampment.

Gathering Rosies! A Humanities Council grant is again supporting work to preserve the stories of West Virginia women who contributed significantly to the defense effort during World War II. Rosie the Riveters filled vital jobs on the home front while the country's men served overseas. The effort to interview Rosies, led by the organization *Thanks! Plain and Simple*, is being assisted by schools, colleges, and Girl Scouts throughout the state.

In These Hills, The West Virginia Mine Wars Journal is a new publication of the Mine Wars Museum in Matewan. It features articles on the museum and historical pieces on the often violent experience of coal miners as they tried to unionize in southern West Virginia between 1912 and 1921. The Mine Wars Museum opened in 2014 with support from the Humanities Council. The next issue of *In These Hills* is due out in December.

With funding support from the Humanities Council, the George Tyler Moore **Center for the Study of the Civil War** at Shepherd University is working to update its Civil War Soldiers Database and make it available online. The information includes enlistment and military service data for nearly 21,000 soldiers from West Virginia and the nearby Potomac Valley.

Visit e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia at wvencyclopedia.org.

Grant Categories

The Humanities Council welcomes applications in the following grant categories.

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

Due: Feb. 1, Sept. 1

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

Due: *Oct. 1, Feb. 1, April 1, June 1

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

Due: Feb. 1

Media Grants (\$20,000 maximum) support projects intended to produce audio or video products, websites, or a newspaper series.

Due: Sept. 1

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

Due: Sept. 1

Teacher Institute Grants (\$25,000 maximum) are available to colleges and universities, RESAs, and the state Department of Education, and support summer seminars for secondary and elementary teachers. **Due:** Sept. 1

*Approaching Deadline!

Grant applications may now be submitted online at wvhumanities.org. The upcoming October 1 deadline offers minigrants that support smaller humanities programming and projects requesting up to \$1,500. Contact grants administrator Erin Riebe with any questions at (304)346-8500 or riebe@wvhumanities.org.

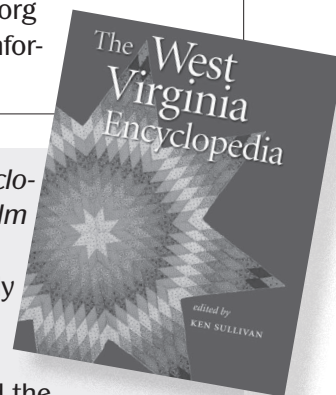


Michael Keller

Our historic headquarters property, the 1836 MacFarland-Hubbard House, is regularly used for on-location work by media producers. On June 30, the house was used by Storyline Motion Pictures, a documentary company from Natick, Massachusetts, for an interview with journalist Paul Nyden (left). And recently a New York film company was here to interview a labor historian and local political figure about the coal industry. Our old house has also been used by West Virginia Public Broadcasting, Morningstar Productions, and filmmakers for American Experience at WGBH Boston. Contact marsh@wvhumanities.org for bookings and fee information.

Give the gift of West Virginia! The *West Virginia Encyclopedia*, now in its second printing, and *West Virginia: A Film History*, the acclaimed public television series, are available at bookstores and at Tamarack in Beckley, or directly from the Humanities Council.

Both are perfect holiday gifts for West Virginians. The 927-page hardbound encyclopedia sells for \$44.95 and the two-DVD film history for \$29.95. West Virginians pay 6% sales tax. Shipping and handling is \$6 per book and \$3 per DVD set. We stand ready to take your order at (304)346-8500 or at www.wvhumanities.org and www.wvencyclopedia.org.



Ohio River Festival of Books

The Cabell County Public Library will once again present the biennial Ohio River Festival of Books with support from the Humanities Council. The 2016 festival kicks off the week of September 26 as authors visit local libraries and schools to discuss their writing and to read selections from their work. Author Curtis Sittenfeld's keynote address will open the main festival on Friday, September 30. Weekend events include presentations by various authors, discussions, workshops, and book sales.

The festival wraps up October 1 with a closing reception featuring Chip Kidd, award-winning graphic designer and writer. Kidd has designed book jackets for writers including Henry Louis Gates Jr., Neil Gaiman, and John Updike. Visit ohioriverbooks.org for a schedule of festival events.



Michael Keller

West Virginia Encyclopedia editor Ken Sullivan recently visited Sacred Heart Grade School to show off e-WV, the popular online version of the *Encyclopedia*. Find out if you are smarter than a fourth grader by testing your West Virginia IQ at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/quizzes>.

Donations April 1 – July 31, 2016

We thank the following generous donors and invite you to join them. Your support provides the base from which we launch our programs and deliver grants to educational projects statewide.

You may donate online at www.wvhumanities.org, send a check in the reply envelope included in this issue of People & Mountains, or contact Victoria Paul at v.paul@wvhumanities.org. All gifts are tax deductible.

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Donors contribute to a qualified nonprofit organization (think Humanities Council) which issues a NIP voucher worth \$1 off state income taxes



for every \$2 donated, with a minimum \$500 donation required. In addition to this state tax credit, those who itemize deductions may also claim the full value of the contribution against their federal taxes, which may bring the total tax relief to two-thirds or even more.

The idea is to encourage nonprofits to better serve disadvantaged communities, a goal to which the Humanities Council has long been committed. To do your part toward this good cause—and to save hard cash at tax time—contact Victoria Paul at v.paul@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500.

Please include the Humanities Council in your year-end giving!

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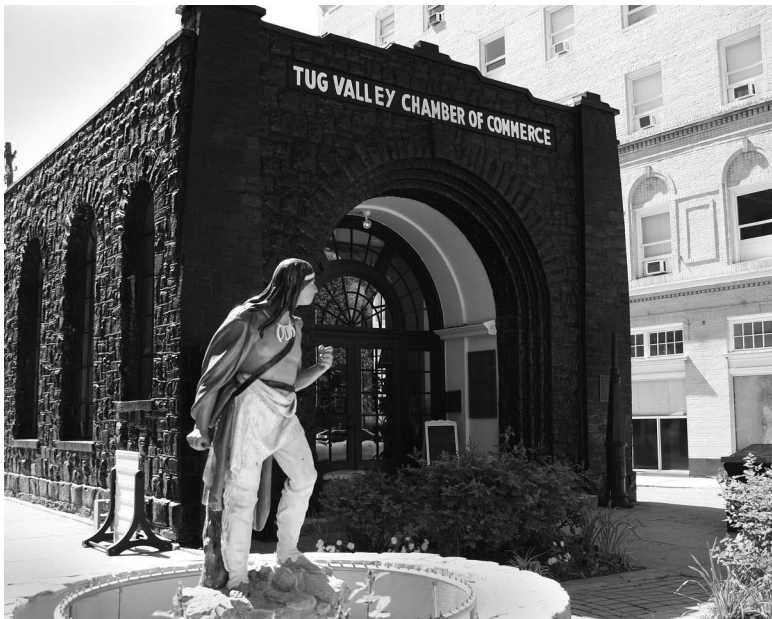
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Coalfields Architecture Exhibit to Tour



The Coal House in Williamson, by architect Hassel Thomas Hicks, from the exhibit.

A traveling exhibit spotlighting the historic architecture of West Virginia’s southern coalfields will tour through the spring of 2017. *Architects and Architecture of the West Virginia Coalfields* features original blueprints and old and new photographs, as well as artifacts representative of the materials used in constructing coalfields buildings.

With Humanities Council support, the National Coal Heritage Area developed the exhibit to highlight architecture exemplifying the wealth and diversity evident during coal’s heyday. Schools, houses, courthouses, and company stores are included in the exhibit, which emphasizes the careers of architects Hassel Thomas Hicks of Welch and Alex B. Mahood of Bluefield. Both the 1928 Kimball War Memorial and the 1933 Coal House in Williamson are attributed to Hicks. Mahood designed the 1931 Mercer County Courthouse, Bluefield’s West Virginian Hotel (1923), and the massive stone Pocahontas Fuel Company Store (1925) in Itmann.

The coalfields architecture exhibit will open October 3 at the McDowell County Public Library in Welch. Among other locations, it will also visit the Larry Joe Harless Community Center in Gilbert and Logan’s new Country Roads Byway Visitor Center. It will wrap up next June at the Craft Memorial Library in Bluefield where visitors may also research Mahood’s drawings, plans, and records included there as part of the Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

Contact the National Coal Heritage Area at info@coalheritage.org or (304)465-3720.

The historic house **Happy Retreat** in Charles Town was recently named a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Built in 1780 and occupied by Col. Charles Washington, the youngest brother of George Washington, Happy Retreat is the focal point of several surviving Washington family homes in Jefferson County. In 2015, the estate was saved from being divided into 25 residential lots by the city of Charles Town, with the property. For more information visit www.happyretreat.org.

An illustration of the Happy Retreat house, a large, white, two-story building with a central portico and columns.