



# West Virginia Humanities Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 7/21/2021

## INTREPID EXPLORER MARKS THE SPOT AT BEECH FORK STATE PARK

CHARLESTON, WV—A century before the American Revolution and about two hundred years before either Charleston or Huntington were going concerns, the first European explorer set foot in the Kanawha Valley. This 17<sup>th</sup> century explorer and frontiersman, Gabriel Arthur, will be portrayed by Doug Wood of Hurricane in a West Virginia Humanities Council *History Alive!* program at Beech Fork State Park this Saturday, July 24 at 7:00pm.

Arthur came through Kanawha Valley while traveling with a band of Yuchis in 1674. He was sent by Major General Abraham Wood from Fort Henry (present-day Petersburg, Virginia) to explore western lands and to trade with Indians in the Appalachian Mountains. Arthur traveled widely with the Yuchis, raiding and trading in the Ohio Valley and elsewhere. During this time, he followed either the Big Coal River or Paint Creek to the Kanawha River, where he and the Yuchis were welcomed at a large Moneton Indian town in the lower Kanawha Valley. Later, he returned to Fort Henry accompanying a trading party bearing loads of furs. The record of his journey provides modern historians and archaeologists with clues to the landscape and people of the region one hundred years before the war for American independence.

Gabriel Arthur is one of the many available character presentations offered through the West Virginia Humanities Council's *History Alive!* program as a means of exploring history by interacting with noteworthy historical figures. These programs provide audiences with the opportunity to question those who have shaped our history.

Historical characterization is the vehicle for this program. Humanities scholars have carefully researched the writings, speeches and biographies of the characters they portray and whenever possible, use their original words.

The West Virginia Humanities Council is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing educational programs in the humanities for all West Virginians. For 40 years the Council has been providing educational programs in the humanities across the state.

This program is available to both non-profit and for-profit groups. For more information call the West Virginia Humanities Council at 346-8500 or visit [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org).

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*The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council is supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.*