



MOUNTAINEERS ARE ALWAYS FREE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST VIRGINIA SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Welcome to a new year! The January 2025 edition of Mountaineers are Always Free highlights recent events, books you should read, and more events that will be held in the coming months. Many great things are planned for 2025, so stay tuned!

WEST VIRGINIA'S NEW GOVERNOR

The West Virginia Semiquincentennial Commission would like to extend a warm welcome to the state's 37th Governor, Patrick Morrisey!

Morrisey's will be sworn in at the State Capitol at 11:00 AM on Monday, January 13th. Inauguration Day will also feature several other events, such as a faith-based public breakfast at the Culture Center and a parade in downtown Charleston, as well as the Governor's Ball that will be held at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center.

The West Virginia Semiquincentennial Commission's beloved float is set to make an appearance at the inaugural parade, and several commission members plan to be in attendance to welcome our new Governor.

The commission looks forward to working with Morrisey and his administration as we continue to celebrate the founding of our nation!



Photo: Patrick Morrisey, who was elected as the 37th Governor of West Virginia and will be sworn into office on January 13, 2025

A BRIGHT NEW OPPORTUNITY

The West Virginia Semiquincentennial Commission has partnered with Marshall University to offer several exceptional students the opportunity to work with commission to develop communications strategies that speak to college and high school students across the state. The focus will be on highlighting West Virginia's role in the upcoming America 250 celebration.

Students will have opportunities to reach communities across West Virginia and the nation. This will be a multidisciplinary experiential learning internship with a stipend.

The America 250 internship is offered through the Marshall University Honors College as an experiential learning opportunity. The course is offered as an Honors Internship (HON 489) in the Spring 2025 semester.



Photo: Marshall University Honors Internship Course Students at the opening orientation for the course: (Standing, L-R) Dr. Brian A. Hoey (Honors College Dean), Senator Eric Tarr, Gentry Porter, Benjamin McElroy, Michael Haynes, Caleb Ferguson, Mary Beth Ferda, Cabinet Secretary Randall Reid-Smith (Seated, L-R) Kayleigh Garcia, Skylar Elliott, Maria Ramey



**CALLING
ALL
STUDENTS!**



Are you considering participating in next year's West Virginia Social Studies Fair? Are you interested in doing a project focused on American history? If so, we encourage you to enter your project under the Social Studies Fair's new "America 250" project category!



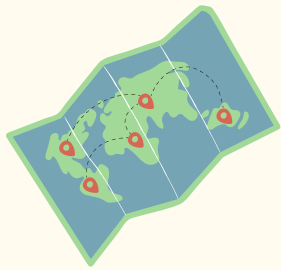
Students are invited to engage in research and present on the founding of America or the lasting contributions of West Virginia as the new nation was being formed. Projects within this category may include elements of other categories but must emphasize the creation of our country 250 years ago.

This category will be available for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years.

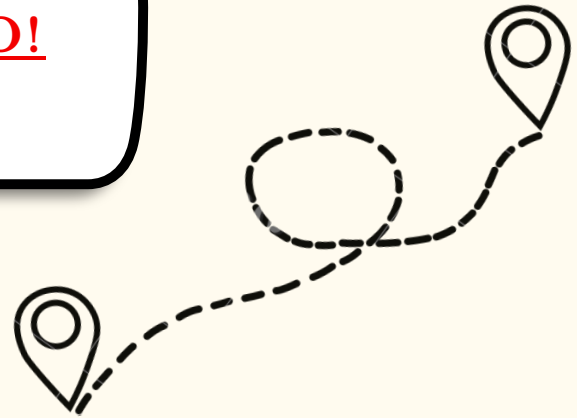
Sample Themes:

- The Declaration of Independence: Voices of Freedom
- West Virginia's Role in America's Founding: A Historical Journey
- The Founding Fathers: Crafting a Nation from the Ground Up
- America at 250: How the Ideals of the Founding Fathers Shape Our Future

For more information, please visit:
<https://wvssfair.com/classifications/>



**FIELD TRIP?
LET'S GO!**



In 2026, the United States will mark our Semiquincentennial: the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Today's young people are the leaders, innovators, and thinkers who will shape the next 250 years — and it's important their voices are heard as we commemorate this historic milestone.

America's Field Trip is a contest that invites students across the country in grades 3–12 to be part of America's 250th anniversary by sharing their perspectives on what America means to them — with the opportunity to earn an unforgettable field trip experience at some of the nation's most iconic historic and cultural landmarks.

Students are asked to submit writing or original artwork in response to the contest's prompt: "What does America mean to you?"

Submissions will be accepted until Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. ET.

For more information, visit:

<https://america250.org/fieldtrip/>



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Construction continues on “West Virginia: Nature Designs a State That FUELS a Nation,” a new outdoor exhibit located outside the Culture Center on the Capitol Complex.

Several large exhibit items, including an approximately 8,000 lbs steel coil from Nucor, have been delivered to the exhibit site, and cases for smaller items were delivered to the site in late December.

Stay tuned for further updates on the exhibit!



Photos taken during construction of the new outdoor exhibit, entitled “West Virginia: Nature Designs a State that Fuels a Nation,” December 2024, Photos courtesy Samuel Calvert



THE NATIONAL COMMISSION VISITS

On April 23, 2025, the National America 250 Commission will hold its meeting right here in West Virginia!

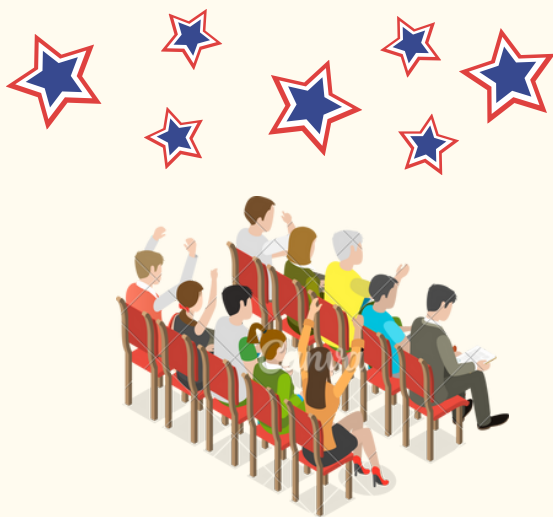
The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission was established by Congress in 2016 to plan and orchestrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Appointed by the House and Senate leadership of both parties, the nonpartisan Commission is composed of 16 private citizens, 4 U.S. Representatives and 4 Senators, as well as 12 ex-officio members from all three branches of the federal government and its independent agencies.



Photo: Senator Shelley Moore Capito speaks during the Battle Days 250th Celebration at Tu-Endie-Wei State Park, Point Pleasant, West Virginia, October 10, 2024 (Photo by Stephen Brightwell)

West Virginia's own Senator Shelley Moore Capito is one of only four U.S. Senators to sit on the National Commission.

The National Commission will visit the State Capitol in Charleston on April 22, and will host their meeting at the Culture Center on April 23.

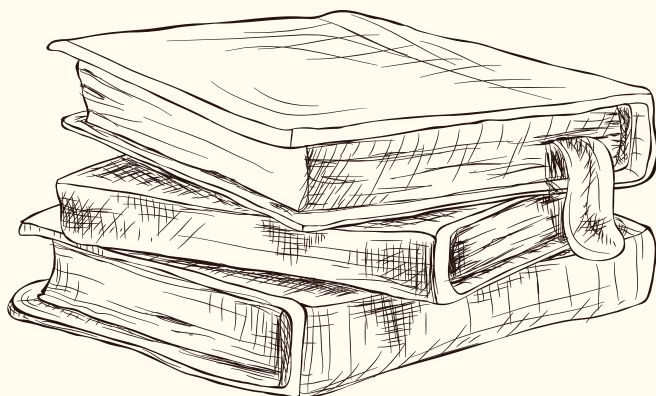
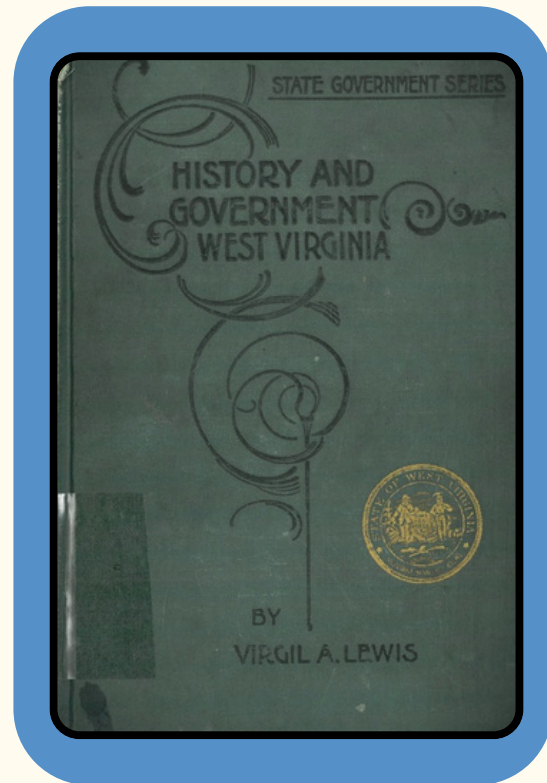


REVOLUTIONARY READINGS

Want to learn more about the early days of West Virginia?

Virgil A. Lewis' *History And Government of West Virginia* is an excellent source of information regarding the early days of West Virginia! Featuring a plethora of information about the area before it became a state, including a variety of amazing sketches, this book is chalked full of knowledge for anyone who's curious about the state!

Be sure to visit the Archives Library at the Culture Center to take a look through Lewis' *History and Government of West Virginia*!





West Virginia Landscapes

Nov 27 2023 - Jan 05 2024
accepting submissions
Feb 16 2024
accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline
Mar 3 2024, 2pm
opening reception, the Culture Center

MOUNTAIN FALLS
KELSEY MURPHY AND ROBERT P. BOMKAMP

West Virginia Historic Buildings and Structures

Apr 08 2024 - May 24 2024
accepting submissions
Jul 02 2024
accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline
Jul 28 2024, 2pm
opening reception, the Culture Center

BAPTIST STEEPLE II
GEORGE HARPER

West Virginia Wildlife

Sep 20 2024 - Nov 08 2024
accepting submissions
Dec 20 2024
accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline
Jan 12 2025, 2pm
opening reception, the Culture Center

A THIN BLADE
BARRIE KAUFMAN

West Virginia Historic Figures

Feb 10 2025 - Mar 25 2025
accepting submissions
May 09 2025
accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline
June 01 2025, 2pm
opening reception, the Culture Center

DEVIL ANSE
STEVE BRIGHTWELL

THE INSPIRED SERIES

The opening reception for “West Virginia Wildlife” has been moved from January 12, 2025 to January 26, 2025 @ 2:00PM. The reception will still be held at the Culture Center in Charleston.

Don't forget that submissions for the “West Virginia Historic Figures” INSPIRED Series will open on February 10, 2025. All submissions should be delivered to the Culture Center at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston.

“West Virginia Historic Figures,” the fourth and final exhibit of the INSPIRED Series. More information on the INSPIRED Series can be found at: <https://wvculture.org/agencies/museums/>

Questions regarding the INSPIRED Series should be directed to State Museum Exhibits Coordinator Sidney Duncan at: (Sidney.L.Duncan@wv.gov).

OLD TIME COUNTRY COOKIN'

Potato Soup

Ingredients - 3 potatoes sliced, 1 1/4 teaspoons salt, 1/4 cup celery tops, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 1/2 onion, 2 cups hot milks, 2 cups boiling water, 1 tablespoon butter, 2 tablespoons flour

Preparation - Cook potatoes, celery, onion, and water for twenty minutes; press through a sieve; add seasonings and hot milk, and thicken with butter and flour blended together.

Original recipe can be found in: *Twentieth Century Cook Book and Home Candy Making*, The Geographical Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1921



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

January 6, 2025

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for:
West Virginia: Nature Designs a State that
FUELS a Nation
The Culture Center
Charleston, WV

January 13, 2025

Inauguration of Governor Patrick Morrisey
Charleston, WV

February 10, 2025

Submissions open for:

“West Virginia Historic Figures” INSPIRED
Series
The Culture Center
Charleston, WV

March 25, 2025

Submission deadline for:

“West Virginia Historic Figures” INSPIRED
Series
The Culture Center
Charleston, WV

April 22-23, 2025

National America 250 Commission Meeting
The Culture Center, State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV



Website:

www.america250wv.org

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america250wv@wv.gov

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