



MOUNTAINEERS ARE ALWAYS FREE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST VIRGINIA SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Who's ready for February? The February 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. 2025 is going to be an exciting year, so stay tuned!

INAUGURAL PARADE RECAP

On January 13th, 2025, The West Virginia Semiquincentennial Commission had the honor of participating in Governor Patrick Morrisey's Inaugural Parade. Despite the cold weather, many spectators lined Kanawha Boulevard to watch the parade in the new Governor's honor.

Aside from the Semiquincentennial Commission, participants in the parade included The West Virginia Air National Guard Honor Guard, the Beni Kedem Shriners, Charleston Job Corps, Attorney General J. B. McCuskey, Secretary of State Kris Warner, Auditor Mark Hunt, The Charleston Police Honor Guard, the West Virginia University and Marshall University Marching Bands and mascots, and several high school bands from across the state.



Photo: The West Virginia Semiquincentennial Commission float rests on Kanawha Boulevard awaiting the beginning of the Inaugural Parade, Charleston, WV, January 13, 2025. Photo by Aaron Parsons.

IT'S HISTORY BOWL SEASON!

In 2010, the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, now the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, began an exciting new challenge for eighth graders to test their West Virginia history knowledge: the West Virginia History Bowl Tournament. Teams of students from around the state face off in an academic bowl competition focusing on West Virginia history, literature, arts, architecture, geography and culture.

Regional tournaments are held in eight regions across the state (based off former RESA regions). The regional tournament winners and the runner-up team move forward to the state tournament held in late April at the Culture Center, State Capitol Complex, in Charleston. A Play-In tournament is held after the conclusion of the regional competitions to allow teams from all across the state to compete for a second chance to qualify for the State Championship.

Eighth graders in public, private and home school education programs are eligible to compete on the four-person teams in double-elimination tournament play.

To learn more about the West Virginia History Bowl, contact Ella Preece (ella.s.preece@wv.gov) or visit:

<https://wvculture.org/learn/history-bowl/>



Photo: 2024 History Bowl Champions Sherrard Middle School Team Two, (L to R) WVDACH Cabinet Secretary Randall Reid-Smith, Team Sponsor Dan Gatts, Emily Gatts, Chloe Pickett, Chase Fromhart, Connor Fromhart, and Delegate Jeffrey Stephens. Photograph by Stephen Brightwell, WVDACH.



**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!



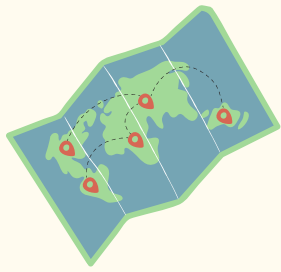
Students are invited to engage in research and present on the founding of America or the lasting contributions of West Virginia as the new nation was being formed. Projects within this category may include elements of other categories but must emphasize the creation of our country 250 years ago.

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

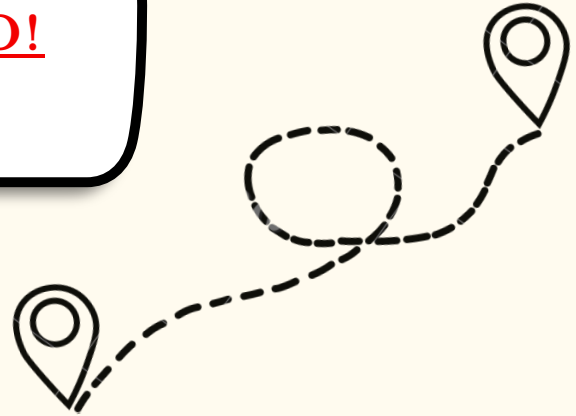
Sample Themes:

- 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. All West Virginia students grades 3-12 are encouraged to apply!

For more information, visit:
<https://america250.org/fieldtrip/>



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

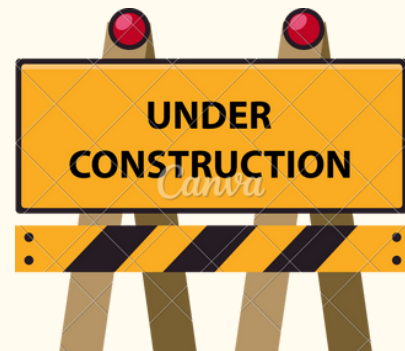
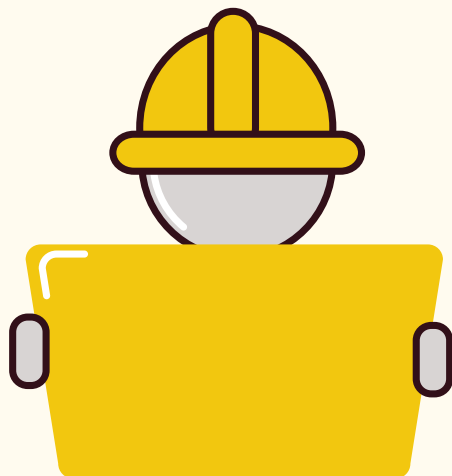
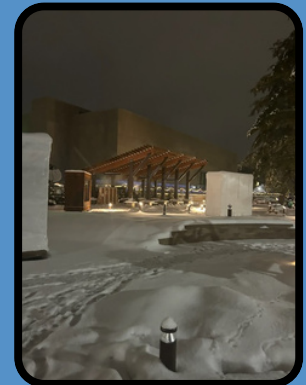
Construction continues on “West Virginia: Nature Designs a State That FUELS a Nation,” a new outdoor exhibit located outside the Culture Center on the Capitol Complex.

Despite the recent cold and snow, the installation of this wonderful new exhibit continues. Cases have been installed to house smaller artifacts, and construction on the northside retaining wall is nearing completion.

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!

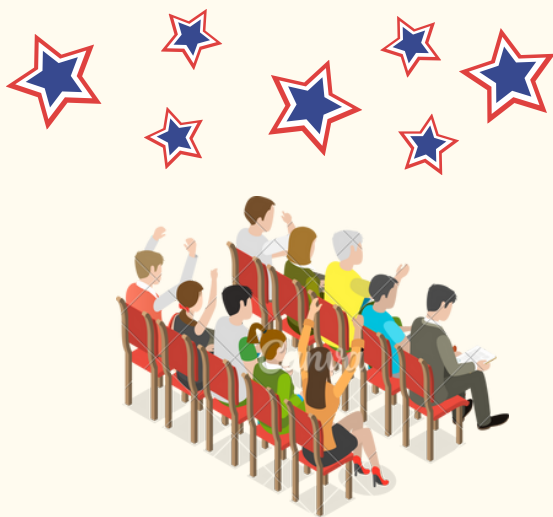
The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission was established by Congress in 2016 to plan and orchestrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Appointed by the House and Senate leadership of both parties, the nonpartisan Commission is composed of 16 private citizens, 4 U.S. 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.

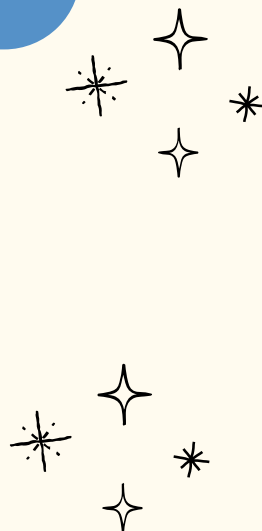
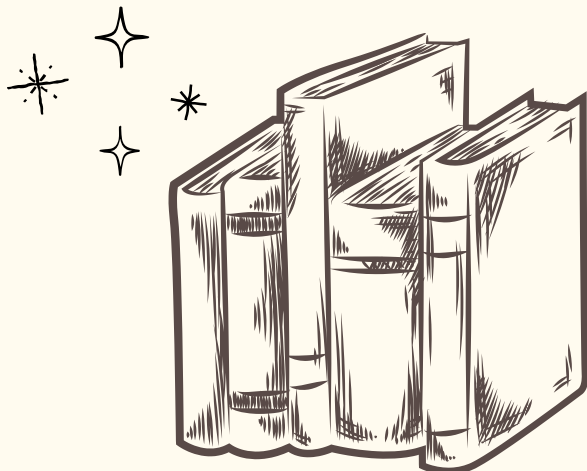
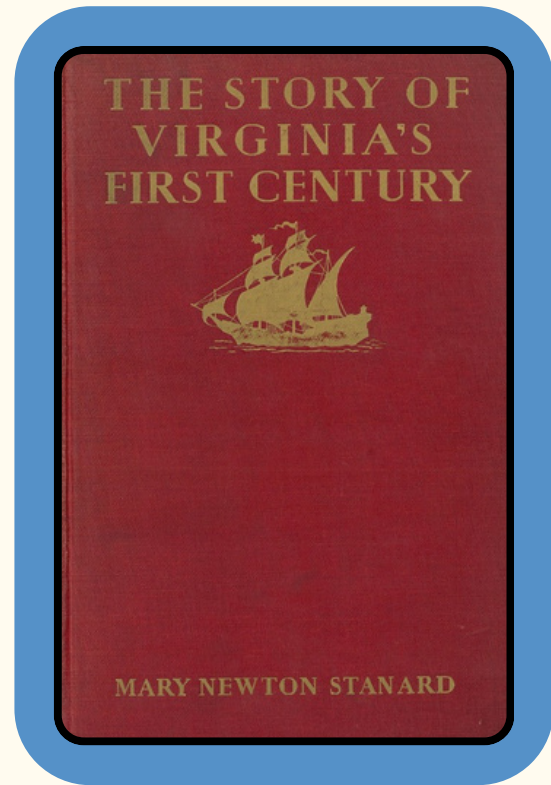


REVOLUTIONARY READINGS

Are you interested in learning more about what the colony of Virginia was like before the American Revolution? Then you should check out Mary Newton Stanard's *The Story of Virginia's First Century*.

Giving much insight into the background of England prior to the establishment of the colonies and how English traditions affected the development of the Virginia colony, Stanard's work is a great read for all lovers of Virginia and West Virginia History.

Be sure to visit the Archives Library at the Culture Center to take a look through Stanard's *The Story of Virginia's First Century*.



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

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'

New England Raspberry Cake

Ingredients - 1/2 cup butter, 1 cup sugar, 2 egg yolks, 2/3 cup milk, 2 cups flour, and 1 teaspoon baking powder

Preparation - This old-fashioned, delicious cake is baked in layers. Mix the butter and sugar to a cream, add the egg yolks well beaten and the milk; then stir in flour, in which has been sifted the baking powder. Bake in jelly-cake pans. For the filling, crush slightly 1 quart raspberries, add 2 egg whites, 1 cupful powdered sugar, and a few drops of lemon juice. Whip until thick; spread between layers and over the top. To be eaten with cream.

Original recipe can be found in: *Mrs. Curtis's Cook Book: A Manual of Instruction in the Art of Everyday Cookery*, by Isabel Gordon Curtis, The Success Company, New York, 1909



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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

Website:
www.america250wv.org

Contact Us:
america250wv@wv.gov

April 22-23, 2025

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

June 14, 2025

250th Anniversary of the Creation of the U.S. Army,
West Virginia State Capitol Complex

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