

Spring 2011

WVRHC Newsletter, Spring 2011

West Virginia & Regional History Center

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West Virginia and Regional History Collection

NEWSLETTER

Volume 26, No. 2

West Virginia University Libraries

Spring 2011

“Make Haste Slowly,” Abraham Lincoln Advises The Francis H. Pierpont Civil War Telegram Series

One hundred and fifty years ago this spring, the citizens of western Virginia found themselves at a crossroads. On April 17, 1861, their Richmond-based leaders passed an ordinance declaring that Virginia would leave the United States in order to join a newly formed nation -- the Confederate States of America. Though state law required that this ordinance be ratified by a popular vote before implementation (scheduled for May 23), Virginia's leaders demonstrated that gaining public approval was just a formality by embarking immediately on military action against the United States of America. On April 18, the state militia seized both the Norfolk Naval Yards and the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, and in the days that followed, efforts began to seize and secure strategic points across Virginia.

To most Virginians living west of the Alleghenies, secession from and overt military action against the United States, before the people had even spoken, was nothing short of traitorous despotism. Western Virginians had, in fact, been at odds with their government over issues ranging from taxation and representation to education for decades. But this latest act, engineered by eastern gentry whose fortunes were tied to the slavery-based economy of the Southern plantations, was beyond the pale.

Alarmed by the haste of Virginia's military action, western Virginians realized that any attempt to thwart their

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

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STAGER, Gen. Sup't, Cleveland, Ohio. I. R. ELWOOD, Sec'y, Rochester, N. Y.

Mr Pierpont *Camp near* *1861.*
By Telegraph from Huttonsville 14. 1861.
Have run to Cheat river today
Enemy retreated to Staunton
I advise you to proceed
with the political
organization of the country
up to this point
G. McClellan
May Genl Wash
24 28 61

“[I] advise you to proceed with the polical organization of the country up to this point.” McClellan to Pierpont, Huttonsville, July 14, 1861.

government's intentions must be immediate. Small scale meetings to explore options began on the very day the Secession Ordinance was passed. On April 22, 1861, just five days after passage, a crowd of more than 1,000 western Virginians loyal to the United States assembled at Clarksburg on just two days' notice. Known today as the Clarksburg Convention, this meeting resulted in the drafting of a resolution condemning the state government's actions, and the development of a plan to convene a more formal assembly in Wheeling at which representatives of all northwestern Virginia counties would be present in three weeks' time.

West Virginia and Regional History Collection NEWSLETTER. A publication of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection and Special Collections, West Virginia University Libraries, Wise Library, P.O. Box 6069, Morgantown, WV 26506-6069. (304) 293-3536.

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ISSN 1041-8695

On May 13, 1861 delegates from twenty-seven northwestern Virginia counties gathered to plot the future of their region in what became known as the First Wheeling Convention. The debate focused almost immediately on the creation of a new state. While there was much consensus for such action, it was eventually agreed that concrete steps towards that end would be premature until Virginia's secession had been assured through ratification by popular vote.

A more urgent matter, it was agreed, was securing western Virginia from imminent seizure by forces loyal to the Confederacy. The convention concluded with the plan of seeking immediate military assistance from Washington upon ratification of the Secession Ordinance, and for the delegates to meet once again in Wheeling in June.

During the Second Wheeling Convention which began on June 11, Francis H. Pierpont emerged as one of the principal advocates of immediately forming a loyal or



Francis H. Pierpont (1814-1899) circa 1861.

“reorganized” government of Virginia in order to provide for the protection of loyal Virginians everywhere while the deliberations over statehood continued. As the Richmond government had abdicated its charge by joining a foreign nation, Pierpont held, it stood to reason that a new governing structure for Virginia, U.S.A. was needed regardless of whether or not a new state was created. Moreover, Pierpont maintained, the creation of a loyal Virginia government was essential to the statehood movement as it would be unconstitutional for a new state to be carved out of an existing state without the existing state's approval.

Recognizing the wisdom of this position along with the urgency of creating a governing authority to take command in the current crisis, on June 19, 1861, the Second Wheeling Convention adopted an “Ordinance for the Reorganization of the State Government.” On the following day, Francis H. Pierpont was unanimously elected governor.

The course of Pierpont's actions at the helm of the Reorganized Government of Virginia, including his critical role in creating West Virginia, are documented in detail by the West Virginia Collection's voluminous Francis H. Pierpont Collection. Including political papers, correspondence, speeches, essays, news clippings, and scrapbooks, the collection contains more than 800 telegrams dating from the period during which the loyal government of Virginia was based in Wheeling (1861-1863). The messages comprise nearly a daily record of the governor's efforts to preserve Union rule in western Virginia over the next two years.

The West Virginia and Regional History Collection is pleased to announce that the complete Francis H. Pierpont Civil War Telegram Series will be made available online for the first time in a new digital collection to be debuted by the WVU Libraries on June 20, 2011, the 150th anniversary of Pierpont's election as Governor of Virginia.

The Pierpont Telegram Series consists mostly of telegrams received by Pierpont between June 1861 and May 1863. The vast majority of communications concern military matters. Many messages regard the raising and outfitting of troops, and the appointment of officers. In a communication of June 27, 1861, one week after Pierpont was elected but before he actually assumed control (the Reorganization Ordinance did not go into effect until July 1), he received a communication from Major General George B. McClellan, commander of the Union Army's Department of the Ohio, outlining his responsibility in the latter regard:

His Excy. FH Pierpoint Wheeling June 27 1861. By Telegraph, from Grafton June 27 1861. Since I recognize you as the Governor of Virginia it devolves on you to appoint

officers for the Regiments mustered into the US Service. The second & third Regiments are nearly formed & appointments required I suggest that elections of men be respected for company officers & that the best men you can find be selected for the field officers. The order of the president for three years volunteers does not recognize right of election, but leaves appointments of officers with Governor of the state. General officers are appointed by the president. G. B. McClellan, Maj Genl

Pierpont would receive a great many telegrams in the ensuing weeks and months regarding the need for appointments of high ranking officers including communications from both soldiers and private citizens recommending for or against particular candidates.

Another important function of the governor was that of outfitting the troops under his command. This included not only securing and distributing arms, uniforms and other supplies, but also finding the funds to acquire such provisions. Several telegrams suggest that loyal Virginia troops were poorly armed and ill equipped. On October 3, 1861, Brigadier General Benjamin F. Kelley wrote from atop Big Sewall Mountain that he had urgent need for blankets and a cannon. "It is impossible to render competent service to the country unless provided with the means to do it," Kelley noted.



Gen. Benjamin F. Kelley (1807-1891)

Several weeks later, Colonel Henry Anisansel of the First (West) Virginia Cavalry complained, "What does it mean, I have rec'd ... three hundred revolvers, four inches, playthings for children ... such weapons were not intended for a regiment..."



"Constituent Convention of Virginia assembled in the Custom House at Wheeling, Ohio Co., June 1861—Sketched by Jasper Green. Harper's Weekly, July 6, 1861.

A great many telegrams report on the progress of the war and the constant struggle for control of western Virginia. On July 14, 1861 General McClellan wired that his forces had pushed the Confederates beyond the Cheat River and that they had retreated to Staunton. "I advise you," McClellan wrote, "to proceed with political organization of the country up to this point."

A week later, however, Pierpont was notified that a force of one thousand secessionist troops had arrived in Marion County. To respond to this emergency, on July 21, Colonel David T. Hewes, Third Virginia (Union) Regiment wrote to Pierpont's attorney general, James S. Wheat, with the suggestion that Colonel Cyrus Vance of Clarksburg, "a gentleman in every way qualified," be appointed to raise a regiment immediately to respond to the threat in North-Central (West) Virginia. Such communications would take place on nearly a daily basis for the next two years.

As might be expected, Governor Pierpont received many telegrams during Confederate General Albert Gallatin Jenkins' raid throughout the heart of (West) Virginia during the summer of 1862. On September 4, Colonel J.A.J. Lightburn reported that Colonel J. C. Rathbone had surrendered extensive troops under his command along with the town of Spencer to Jenkins. (Rathbone was later "dismissed" from service as a consequence of giving up without a fight.) The following day, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Frost reported that Jenkins had crossed into Ohio. On September 8, Frost wrote that the Confederate General was "reported at his farm," (*Greenbottom*) in Mason County. A wire of September 10 informed the governor that Frost and a Union force of 750 had driven Jenkins across the Kanawha and into Cabell County where Colonel John C. Paxton "attacked & routed him ... handsomely."

Several telegrams contain reports of citizens suspected of disloyalty or aiding and abetting the Confederacy. Likely one of the most startling communications Pierpont received was one informing him that Judge Lewis Wetzel, editor of the Point Pleasant Register, had been "shot dead" by John Hall, one of the most prominent of the Wheeling Convention members. "The difficulty arose from an article that appeared in this morning's paper," the telegram's author noted.

The Pierpont telegrams include a number of significant communications from Washington. One of the earliest and most noteworthy is a wire from U.S. Senate leader Sen. Benjamin Franklin Wade indicating the Senate's recognition of the legitimacy of both the Pierpont government and its representatives. Wade wrote on July 7, 1861, "Your senators shall be admitted to their seats whenever they appear whether the old ones are vacated or not but I intend to have them vacated tomorrow."

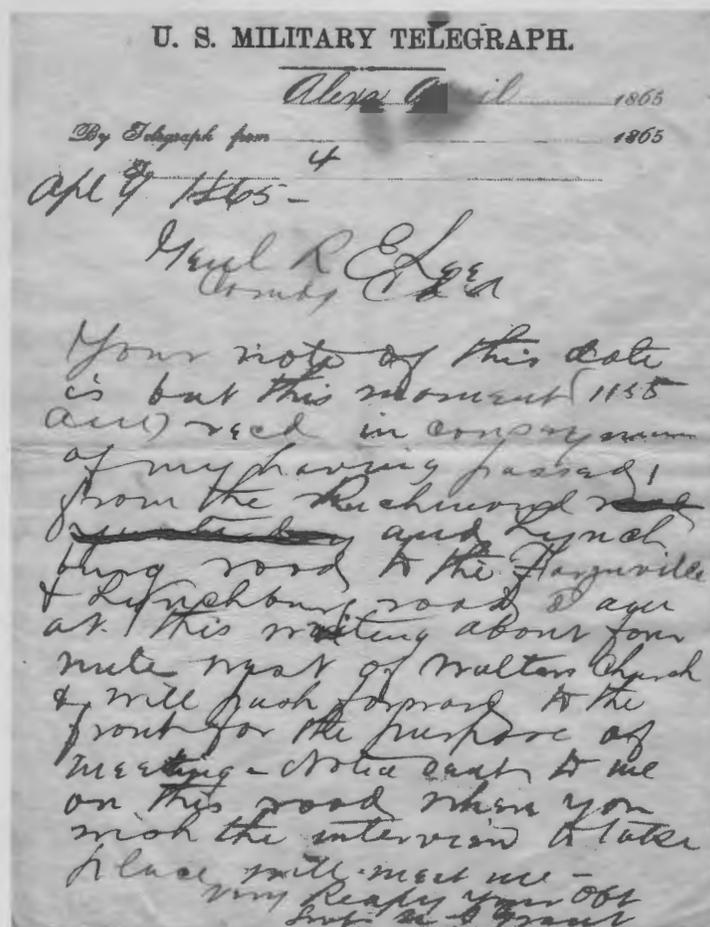
There are five telegrams from President Lincoln in the series, including the chief executive's oft-cited advice to Pierpont in regard to the creation of the new state of West Virginia. Quoting a Latin adage (*festina lente*) meaning "with deliberate speed," Lincoln instructed the governor to "Make haste slowly."

Whereas all but one of the Pierpont Civil War Telegram Series date from the period in which the Reorganized Government of Virginia was based in Wheeling, the single exception is a notable one. On April 9, 1865, by which point Pierpont's government was established in Richmond, the governor received the following message from Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton:

This Department has just recd official report of the surrender - this day of Genl Lee & his army to Lt. Genl Grant

on the terms proposed by Genl Grant. Details will be given as speedily as possible Edwin M. Stanton Secy of War

Stanton appended his message with a series of telegrams exchanged by Grant and Lee earlier that day in which the opposing generals reviewed the terms of Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, CSA, which would soon bring the Civil War to an end. This fascinating exchange - the precise and cordial words of the two leaders, telegraphed to each other at the moment of surrender - will be available for all to see and read when the West Virginia and Regional History Collection's Pierpont Civil War Telegrams Series website makes its debut on West Virginia Day, June 20, 2011.



Grant to Lee, April 9, 1865: Your note of this date is but this moment (11:55 am) recd.... Read the rest of this several page exchange between the two generals on the West Virginia and Regional History Collection's Francis H. Pierpont Civil War Telegram Series website debuting on June 20, 2011.

West Virginia Day 2011
The Issue is Upon US!
Civil War and the Rending of Virginia

In commemoration of the dramatic events that gripped our nation one hundred and fifty years ago this spring, the WVU Libraries' 2011 West Virginia Day Celebration on June 20, 2011 will focus upon the outbreak of the Civil War. Drawing upon the West Virginia Collection's unparalleled holdings of documents by West Virginia's two founding fathers, Francis H. Pierpont and Waitman T. Willey, the annual West Virginia day exhibit will elucidate the emergence of two Virginias in the spring of 1861, one Confederate, and one Union. The two Virginians vied for control of western Virginia until West Virginia was formed as the nation's thirty-Fifth state on June 20, 1863.

The distinguished historian Dr. John E. Stealey, III, will be the key-note speaker at the West Virginia Day forum which will commence at 10 o'clock a.m. The pre-eminent authority regarding the conventions and events that led to the establishment of the Reorganized Government of Virginia and the new state of West Virginia, Dr. Stealey has written or contributed to several recent books and articles that pertain to this



Dr. John E. Stealey, III will be the keynote speaker at the WVU Libraries' West Virginia Day forum. Dr. Stealey is the pre-eminent authority regarding the Wheeling Conventions and related events.

critical period in West Virginia history. His article, "West Virginia's Constitutional Critique of Virginia: The Revolution of 1861-1863," appears in the current issue (March 2011) of the journal *Civil War History*.

In accordance with tradition, all West Virginia Day Celebration attendees will be entitled to receive a complimentary copy of the WVU Libraries' annual West Virginia Day poster which has become a coveted collectible commemorating the state's birthday each year.

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West Virginia University Libraries

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Selected Recent Acquisitions

Barbour, James, Governor. Land Grant to Jacob Bumgarner in Harrison County, 1813, 1 item, Gift in 2011. A&M 3758.

Original copy of land grant to Jacob Bumgarner for 372 acres "on the south fork of Hughes's river" in Harrison County, Virginia (present day West Virginia). The land grant is dated 7 October 1813, and is signed by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, James Barbour. The document references three previous treasury warrants by their numbers, including 4653 (1810); 4614 (1811); and 18,444 (1783). Treasury warrants were legal instruments utilized for documenting land acquisitions in Virginia, and were issued in numbered series.

Civil War Letter from Clarksburg, Confederate Bond, and Jonathan Jackson Agreement, 1821, 1864, 3 items, Acquired in 2011. A&M 3759.

Collection includes: 1) letter from Union soldier W. Fleming in Clarksburg (spelled "Clarksburgh") to Mrs. Elizabeth Fleming of Shinnston (mother) regarding troop movement to Beverly and personal matters at home (one leaf, on stationary with graphic of soldier, 20 September [no year]); 2) Confederate bond issued to James M. Beckham for the amount of \$500, assigned to J.R. Ervin of Bath County, Virginia (1864); and 3) financial agreement between Jonathan Jackson, father of "Stonewall" Jackson, and Peter Eile, both of Harrison County, for payment of three dollars and sixteen cents with interest (1821).

Jennewine Brothers. Correspondence from the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War, 1898-1899, 2 1/2 in., Gift in 2011. A&M 3765.

Incoming letters of two soldiers from Monongalia County

natives Edgar C. Jennewine and Frederick N. Jennewine of the 10th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, which fought in both the Spanish-American War and in the immediately following Philippine-American War. Includes original letters and envelopes, as well as some clippings and a photograph. Contents of the letters include descriptions of Manila, attitudes toward and descriptions of Philippine natives and their material culture, and detailed narratives of battles with the Spanish and the Philippine natives. Also includes a complete set of facsimiles with transcripts.

McCabe, Brooks, Collector. Records of the Hotel Kanawha, ca. 1903-1921, 6 in., Gift in 2011. A&M 3760.

Records of the Hotel Kanawha, including two ledgers. One contains a cash journal (July 1917 to March 1921) and the other a guest register (one year in the period ca. 1903-1920). The Hotel Kanawha was constructed in 1903 and served as Charleston's premier hotel until 1965. It was later used by the Job Corps of West Virginia until 1997. The building was demolished in 2003.

McCabe, Robert Emmett, Lawyer. Papers, 1898-1952, 1 ft. 8 in., Gift in 2011. Addendum to A&M 2409.

Contains political and financial records and other material, including: political correspondence (1912-1952, scattered); congressional election campaign records for sixth district (1934); financial statements for oil and gas interests (1937-1944); photographs (1898, 1930s); scrapbook of clippings regarding congressional campaign (1934); day book for cash (1907); ledgers of "abstracts" or notes regarding real estate (six volumes, 1907-1911); and artifact (printers block, undated). There are also oversize items (1904, 1930s), including original drawings of cartoons by "Vinroux" regarding New Deal politics (1930s).

Methodist Protestant Church (Morgantown, W. Va.). Minutes, 1844-1855, 17 pages, Transfer in 2011. A&M 3764.

Facsimile of minute book for the Methodist Protestant Church in the "Pierpont Neighborhood" of Morgantown, (West) Virginia. This church was a member of the "Pittsburgh Conference District". Includes lists of names, financial transactions, and other information.

Moreland, William A. Political Papers, World War II Records, and Other Material, ca. 1855-1965, 2 ft. 2 1/2 in., Gifts in 2010 and 2011. Two Addenda to A&M 2032.

Addendum of 2010 includes Moreland's World War II service records (he served on the home-front), family genealogy and photographs (including photos of his father, James Moreland), (ca. 1900-1965; 7 1/2 in.). Addendum of 2011 includes papers of William Moreland, and papers of his father and grandfather, James R. Moreland and Joseph Moreland. Series include: Genealogy (1898-1948, undated), News Clippings (1898-1945, undated), Photographs (ca. 1860-1942, undated), Historical Narratives (1939, 1942), James R. Moreland Papers (1899-1945, undated), Joseph Moreland Papers (1898-1913, undated), Scrapbook (1897-1950), Miscellaneous (1868, undated), and Photo Album (ca. 1855-1875), (ca. 1855-1950; 1 ft. 7 in.).

Southeastern West Virginia Historical Records, ca. 1870-2010, 1 ft. 2 in., Gift in 2011. A&M 3762.

Photographs and other records documenting the history of southeastern West Virginia. There are four series: photographs, card mounted photos, subjects, and oversize. Photographs document steam train infrastructure and personnel of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in many of the communities of the region (ca. 1900-1950), including Glade, Hinton, and Thurmond, among many others. Card Mounted Photos, ca. 1900-1915, include group portraits. A notable item in this series is a photo of Confederate veterans at a "State Reunion" (1918). Oversize includes photos



A teamster transports freight to the C&O Railroad, possibly in Summers County, WV, ca. 1900.

of Hinton (ca. 1900) and Mt. Hope (1948), among others. There are also books and a motion picture about Hinton.

St. John's Academy (Petersburg, W. Va.). Records, 1925-1989, 4 in., Acquired in 2011. A&M 3766.

Records regarding St. John's Academy of Petersburg, West Virginia. St. John's Academy was founded by Dr. Arthur E. Krause to provide a four-year high school education for students in Grant, Hardy, and Pendleton counties. St. John's opened in 1921 and closed in 1933. An associated Junior College opened in 1931 and closed in 1933. Records include historical information concerning St. John's Academy and Dr. Krause; news clippings; alumni records; 15 issues of *The Mountain Ripple*, the Academy's school paper; programs; photographs; and other material (including a pennant).

Stewart, Ethel Flesher. Postcard Correspondence Regarding West Virginia University and Other Topics, 1908-1912, 3/4 in., Gift in 2011. A&M 3761.

Incoming postcards to Ethel Flesher Stewart (1890-1988) of St. Marys, West Virginia. The 20 postcards featuring images of West Virginia University (9 items) and Morgantown (11 items) are mostly from a correspondent named "James", a WVU student whose messages provide a snapshot of student life in the academic year 1908-1909. There are also postcards with images of St. Marys (8 items), Parkersburg (5 items), Sistersville (3), Mannington (3), Marshall College (2), and other localities (7).



Trainwreck on the B&O Railroad, near St. Marys, WV, 1912.

Sutherland, Howard, Senator. Pension Records for Civil War Veterans and Other Material, ca. 1913-1921, 1 1/4 in., Acquired in 2011. A&M 3769.

Papers of U.S. Senator Howard Sutherland of West Virginia regarding the military pensions of Civil War veterans James Forsyth Harrison and Joseph E. Inscoe, and Spanish-American War veteran Thomas Ingram. Collection includes correspondence between Senator Sutherland, pensioners, and others. Includes typed copies of letters, House and Senate bills, petitions, pension claims, and other material.

Tavener, William C. Civil War Correspondence and Other Material, 1846-1873, 1940, 1 1/2 in., Acquired in 2011. A&M 3763.

Letters of William C. Tavener and members of his family. The family had ties to Lewis and Harrison Counties. Tavener's letters include both personal and military correspondence from the Civil War, most relating to his service as a soldier in the Confederate Army (as Lieutenant Colonel of the 17th Virginia Cavalry) and his death at the Battle of Monocacy. There are also letters from other members of Tavener's family from before and after the Civil War.

Terrill-Porterfield Families. Letters by William Henry Terrill, 1861, 1865, 5 items, Acquired in 2011. Addendum to A&M 3496.

Five letters from William Henry Terrill, U.S. Congressman (Virginia) and lawyer, all written during the Civil War.

Terrill had four sons who served in the Civil War, three as Confederates and one for the Union. Only one son survived the war. Three of the letters date from 1861 and two from 1865. Topics include military service; the effect of the war on the Terrill family; the sale, purchase, and keeping of slaves; and Terrill's support for the Southern cause.

West Virginia Black Lung Association. "Black Lung Billy" Benefits Guide, 1971, 1/2 in., Gift in 2011. A&M 3770.

Two brochures, four and six pages respectively, produced by the West Virginia Black



Francis H. Pierpont, proud father of West Virginia and of twins Mary and Francis William Pierpont. Born on September 13, 1860, Mary passed away at the tender age of three. Francis William lived until 1920.



U Curve, U.S. 50, East Foot of Laurel Mt, Macomber, W.Va., ca. 1930.

Lung Association regarding black lung medical benefits and how disabled miners can apply for them. Some of the infor-

mation is presented in cartoon form. There are also six miscellaneous pages, and six metal plates that were used to produce the publication.

West Virginia University. Student Affairs. Records Regarding USS West Virginia, 1937-2002, 5 in., Transfer in 2011. A&M 5156.

Records created by the Student Affairs office at West Virginia University regarding establishment of a campus memorial including the mast from the World War II era battleship *USS West Virginia* and bell from the earlier armored cruiser *USS West Virginia*. Records regarding the battleship mast include historical information, dedication information (1963), photographs of battleship and mast, clippings, and correspondence of WVU Student Affairs administrator Joseph E. Gluck and others (1960-2001). Records regarding the bell include dedication information (1967) and correspondence (1966-2002).