

Fall 1994

## WVRHC Newsletter, Fall 1994

West Virginia & Regional History Center

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# West Virginia and Regional History Collection

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 10, No. 2

West Virginia University Libraries

Fall 1994

### WEST VIRGINIA DAY 1994

*This year's West Virginia Day historical forum featured the theme "West Virginia and World War II." Five notable speakers related the history of home front activities in West Virginia during the war. These speakers, Brigadier General Dallas C. Brown, Jr. (retired), Mr. Louis E. Keefer, Dr. Robert Conte, Ms. Geraldine Vickers Harrison, and Mr. Earl Summers, Jr., each presented interesting and unique perspectives of the war years. Below are selections from talks of each speaker along with the brief biographical sketch that was used to introduce each speaker at the forum.*

*The forum was held June 20 in the Senator Robert C. Byrd Reading Room of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection in Colson Hall. An extensive exhibit on the same theme of "West Virginia and World War II" was shown in the Mountainlair's Grandview Gallery. Both events were sponsored by WVRHC, the WVU Libraries, and West Virginia University.*

#### **Brigadier General Dallas C. Brown, Jr., U.S.A. (Ret.)**

*Dallas C. Brown, Jr., has strong family ties to West Virginia, being descended from the pioneer family of Cabell-Brown. He began his military career as a student at West Virginia State College, where he obtained a B.A. degree in history and political science. This led to a 30-year career in the regular army. He has served in a variety of positions, from infantry platoon leader of the 82nd Airborne Division to commander of the 319th Military Intelligence Battalion in Vietnam and later as deputy vice director of foreign intelligence of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. His final assignment was as deputy commandant of the U.S. Army War College. During his career he also continued his formal education by obtaining an M.A. degree in Russian area studies and studying at the U.S. Naval War College, the Defense Language Institute, and U.S.A. Russian Institute. Retired from the military, he now teaches as an associate professor of history at his alma mater, West Virginia State College.*

*"Although West Virginia history is not a specialty of mine, my particular topic, and that is West Virginia State College and World War II, is quite familiar to me because I lived there all during World War II. My father was a faculty member, and*



*The entrance to the West Virginia Day exhibit in the Mountainlair. The large, single-star flag was flown at West Virginia University during World War II to honor the University's men in service.*

of course we spent the whole time there. I'd go so far as to say that this period between 1941 and 1945 shaped the rest of my life. Children get interested in various things, and for some reason at age seven, eight, nine I became interested in World War II. I used to keep maps and read *Time* and *Life* magazines, followed the events that were going on.

"I remember December 7, 1941, quite well. It was warm for December that day in Institute outside of Charleston, and I was in our back yard playing with my tin soldiers, made in Japan usually, and I noticed my family members, the men, gathering in the back yard. They were very serious, and I got curious. So I got up and walked over to listen, and my uncle said, 'Go away, Dallas, it doesn't concern you,' and my father said, 'Yes it does. He probably knows more about it than some of us.' Now what they were talking about was not politics of the war, whether it was right or wrong or indifferent, but what they were really discussing was which branch of the service they could or would be allowed to serve in, given that the services were segregated. That's what they were talking about, not whether there should be a war or there shouldn't be a war, and I might add that that certainly was not unique to my family.

"The next day in Charleston I was told that Quarrier, Virginia, and Washington streets were filled with men from all

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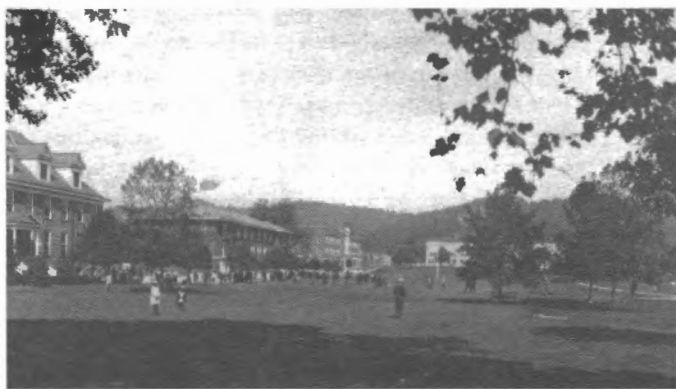
over the county, all over the valley I suppose, trying to enlist, and there was essentially no discussion, that I knew about, about whether we should be in the war, whose fault it was. . . . The opposition to the war simply disappeared.

"Now in my own family, something like ten of them served, mostly volunteers, in the army, army air corps, some in the coast guard. One of my cousins, and this is the guy that changed my life I guess, Henry Gus Brown, came home on leave. We went to the old train station in Charleston to meet him, quite tall, over six feet, and he was a second lieutenant, and he got off the train, and I looked up at those gold bars, and I thought, 'That's what I want to be.' I told some of the others that, and they laughed, and they said, 'Well, you'll grow out of it.' Never did, obviously.

"I remember we had victory gardens, scrap metal collections, war bonds, stamps, etc. I was very proudly elected head, captain, of some college union commandoes. My job . . . was to collect newspapers, flatten tin cans, gather other scrap metal.

"Now about the college, changes in West Virginia State College were dramatic. To begin with, most of the men left to join the armed forces. And I remember the ones who were rejected, they called them 4-F's in those days, usually for physical reasons, sometimes mental handicaps. These men were actually ashamed that they didn't go. They were always explaining, even to the children, why they weren't in the military. In other words, they felt that they belonged.

"The army established a unit called the Army Specialized Training Program on campus. . . . The idea was to train army enlisted men in various technical specialties. About 400 completed this program at West Virginia State, and the overall role of the college was significant in the history of blacks and West



*West Virginia State College on the eve of World War II.*



*The U.S.S. West Virginia after the attack on Pearl Harbor.  
The battleship was one of six that was lost.*

Virginia in general. Approximately 600 of our students served during World War II, including 90 officers.

"Now the officer program I think is interesting in itself. Remember we're in the days of segregation, where the idea of blacks becoming officers was foreign to many people. But our president, John W. Davis, with the able assistance of Professor Daniel Ferguson and Daniel Lincoln, lobbied intensely from about 1939 onwards to get an ROTC unit established. It finally happened in 1942. Of course the first people didn't get commissioned until 1947. . . . Now the 90 students who became officers in World War II were not commissioned from the ROTC [but from] other military programs, particularly Officers Candidate School.

"Now perhaps the most unique or unusual contribution of West Virginia State was the establishment of the Civilian Pilot Training Program under the auspices of the Civil Aeronautics Board. This was in 1939, quite awhile before we were at war. Again this is due to the personal efforts of President John W. Davis. The first director was a man named James C. Evans, the executive assistant to the president, who later became an aide to the secretary of the army, advising on racial matters and problems during World War II. . . . he was a professor of music, but he was also a trained and licensed pilot and also an instructor pilot. He was assisted in training on aircraft mechanics by Dr. Charles Byrd. . . . Now as results of this training a number of West Virginia State College students, including a few women, were already trained and licensed pilots when President Roosevelt, under strong pressure from civil rights groups and others, authorized the formation of all-black aviation units at Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1941. Now we had 50 or 60 students that, graduates, that were already trained and licensed. About 30 of them volunteered, were commissioned, and served in the 99th Pursuit Squadron. This unit had an outstanding combat record in Italy. Their main mission was escorting B-17 and B-24 World War II bombers from Italy into Rumania and sometimes into Germany. They boasted that they never lost a bomber. In other words a bomber that they

were escorting was never shot down. They lost a number of their own men. And the first commander of the squadron was a colonel, first captain and then colonel, George S. Roberts, a graduate of West Virginia State. This unit was later commanded by Lieutenant Colonel and then much later Lieutenant General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who was the second black general officer in the history of the United States. His father was the first one.



*Trainees receive machine gun instruction outside Woodburn Hall. In many respects WVU resembled a military base during World War II.*

“Now the military tradition did not end with World War II. Two years of ROTC training were mandatory until the mid-1960s. Further the college had graduated and commissioned approximately 800 officers, including 13 general officers, over the last 26 years. We commissioned more general officers (probably more) than any other non-military college in the country. . . . To show you the spirit of the thing, [in] the late '60s, there were the beginnings of anti-war demonstrations our campus just as elsewhere (not much demonstrations compared to some places), but they had a meeting one night. A few students [who] were disenchanted with the war for one reason or another were campaigning to get the ROTC removed from the campus. Dr. [William] Wallace, the president, attended the meeting. He wasn't the chair, but he asked if he could speak. So he simply went to the podium and said, 'If the ROTC leaves, I leave.' And then he left. He was a very popular man among the students, and the movement just fizzled out. So the ROTC continued. I think that the experience of the program doesn't say much about me and the other 800-plus guys, and women now, who went through the thing, but it does say a lot about the college and its participation not only in World War II, World War I . . . Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf Conflict, and others.”

### **Louis E. Keefer**

*Louis Keefer is the author of several books on the history of World War II. Scholars in Foxholes: the Story of the Army Specialized Training Program in WW II and Italian Prisoners of War in America have both been published within the past*



*ASTP'ers mingle with women students during a banquet at WVU in 1944.*

*few years, while his newest effort, Shangri-La for Wounded Soldiers, is now awaiting publication. Mr. Keefer has also authored over a hundred journal and magazine articles. His original career was as a traffic engineer, working in West Virginia, Florida, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. In 1978 Mr. Keefer formed his own traffic engineering consultancy. He is a WVU alumnus, having obtained a master's degree in economics in 1954. He has also taught traffic engineering at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, traffic planning at Pennsylvania State University, and has been a visiting lecturer at Pittsburgh, Bucknell, and Yale universities.*

“There were 227 colleges and universities throughout the U.S. that had programs in the ASTP, and the peak number was about 145,000 young men in that program at one time. The subjects, generally speaking, were engineering, languages, there were some boys in medical school, dental school, and veterinarian school, and there were some people studying psychology and personnel. . . . The qualifications, generally speaking, were that we must be a high school graduate. Those of us in engineering had to have some kind of math and science, sort of science, background and be not older than 22—18 to 22. . . . Some of the older men went into languages and med school.

“WVU was one of the first 11 schools of the 227 schools chosen. . . . But there were about 400 young men who came in about April of '43 into the Advanced Engineering Program. That means that they already had some college background and could qualify for advanced position. We were on a quarter basis. We had four 12-week terms with a week in between terms. Of course at that time I guess the quarter system was fairly novel in the U.S. Most schools still had two semesters and summer school. So the program was considered to be accelerated. . . . A group of us, 25, made up a section. . . . By the way all of the people in ASTP were soldiers. They first had to have basic training. . . . I think the medical students did not have to have the normal basic, but people in engineering and languages did have to have the 13 weeks, usually an infantry basic. We came up from Fort Benning, Georgia, I

think about the end of December 1943, and if I'm not mistaken that was just a day or two after there was some sort of national railroad strike. The army took over the train system briefly and didn't do such a great job. So we got dumped somehow on a siding in Fairmont, slept the night in an unheated car with barrack bags and blankets heaped on top of us, and came in by bus to Morgantown the next morning. We lived down the street here in Newman Hall. All the people in Newman Hall were kicked out; we moved in, and it was the first time in my life as an 18-year-old that I ever shared a room with someone. . . . We didn't know how to study, so there was a big attrition rate. . . . We did stand—living at Newman Hall—we did stand reveille over where the Armory used to be . . . behind Mountainlair. It was a big field. . . . And we went out with our—of course we wore uniforms at all times, we had no civilian clothing—we stood formation there, and then we marched over to what was Men's Hall . . . those three old brick buildings on High Street. There was a cafeteria in there, and we shared that with the air cadets. There were several hundred air cadets here, and they lived in this very building on this very floor, like two or three hundred air cadets. . . . In any case I'll just touch briefly on the fact that the ASTP'ers were by and large kind of eggheads . . . we weren't very good soldiers. . . . Whereas the air cadets were very spic and span, knew how to march, and they could sing in cadence, and the girls loved them. So naturally we hated them, and we had some big snowball battles out here in front of the library and that sort of thing. . . . I had physics over in the industrial arts building, I believe from a Mr. and Mrs. Ford, and I had history in the Chemistry Building from Oliver Chitwood. . . . We had English—the concentration was on pre-engineering, but we had other things as well—we had English in the old building up the way, Woodburn Hall. We learned to swim, some of us, in the indoor swimming pool which is in the basement of one of the next two buildings up the street . . . . There was a firing range under the old stadium at the north end, closed in, and we did target practice with .22 rifles, which was kind of fun. So we weren't just turned loose every night, but we actually had to study. But we didn't always. Sometimes we'd sneak out, and one of our favorite places was Chico's on Beechurst Avenue. . . . And we were able to have weekend passes. We could leave sometime Saturday noon after inspection and be back by Sunday evening.

"We didn't volunteer. None of those boys said, 'Hey, we would like to go to college and not go fight.' We were ordered into the program on the basis of our qualifications. That made a lot of young fellas, well, a lot of them didn't want to come, you know. We weren't always gung-ho to go to college. Some did but not all. Many of us had a certain guilt complex about that because the boys that we had gone to high school with in most cases were way off someplace else, and the longer we stayed in the program the more guilty we felt. . . . The acronym for ASTP was All Safe Till Peace. . . . Pressure began to build in Congress, in fact, just about the time my group started here at WVU. We were barely unpacked before it was announced in February . . . that ASTP would be sharply curtailed. . . . Now at WVU we were so lucky. There were about

800 ASTP'ers here at one time. On March 31, 1944, something like 500 were shipped out, and surprisingly the Morgantown newspaper . . . announced where we were going, very much against Pentagon policy. That was absolutely a no-no. So somebody leaked the word, but around 400 of us went into the Transportation Corps . . . at New Orleans. Others went to Quartermaster [Corps] at Camp Lee, and still others went to Camp Crowder Signal Corps. None of us went into the infantry.

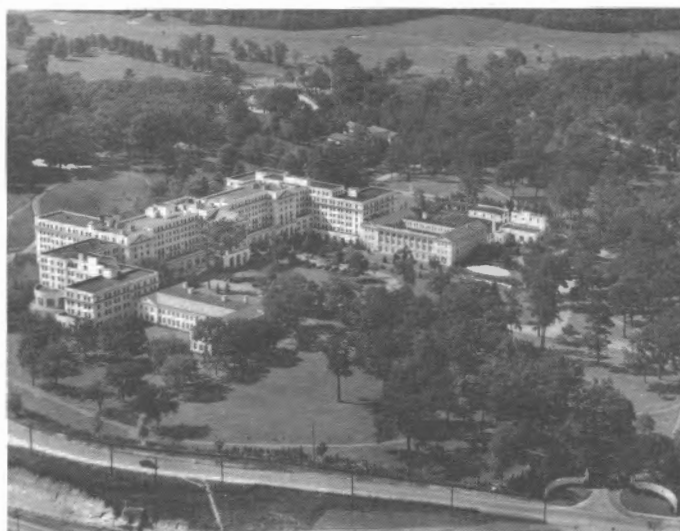
"The thing about ASTP that I would like to conclude with is that from a military standpoint had the war lasted a few years longer, probably ASTP would have survived intact, probably some of those college-trained boys would have been able to do something much more in keeping with their training and abilities than they ended up doing. But that wasn't the case. Because of the atom bomb the war ended soon and so forth, and so in a sense the AST program was a military failure. It didn't help win the war in any way whatsoever. It did help keep a few colleges afloat. . . . But the positive thing, and that's what we must remember, is that it introduced, it opened up to a lot of young men the thought that they could go to college after the war, assuming they survived the war. There were a lot of young men in these programs who had never thought about going to college, couldn't afford it I'm sure, and so pretty much dismissed it. . . . The coming of these military programs, educational programs, opened up the eyes of a lot of young men. I'm sorry, no women at that time. A lot of young men could go to college. They liked the idea. They saw the inside of what a college looked like, what it could do for them, and so after the war, by my unscientific survey . . . four out of five went back to college and finished. . . . So in fact the program was a social success—success for the nation by means of the things that these young men accomplished."

### **Dr. Robert Conte**

*Dr. Robert Conte is the official historian for the Greenbrier Hotel at White Sulphur Springs. He obtained his Ph.D. at Case Western Reserve University in American studies. He has also worked as a historian/archivist at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland and at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. At the Greenbrier Hotel Dr. Conte is archivist for the Greenbrier Hotel's historical records and curator of the President's Cottage Museum and spends much time each year coordinating the historical interpretation for the benefit of the resort's guests. In 1990 he published the book, The History of the Greenbrier: America's Resort. He has also written numerous articles for local and regional publications and contributed to books, museum exhibits, and television programs relating to the history of the hotel. In 1991 Dr. Conte completed six years as a member of the West Virginia Humanities Council.*

"You know two very different things happened at the Greenbrier during the Second World War. One relatively short, when it was used to intern enemy alien diplomats and in the longer period when it was an army hospital. . . . So what I want to do is kind of get a running start here to give you some sense of what the Greenbrier was that made it a surprising idea that it

should be a hospital. . . . So the Greenbrier was a famous place, either the whole nineteenth-century history of the resort, it comes successfully into the twentieth century due to ownership by the railroad, across the street from the C&O, and they had poured millions of dollars into the property right in the early thirties. . . . So the building was in good shape. The resort was in good shape, even though the war starting after a decade of depression, the money at the Greenbrier in terms of upgrading that facility had been spent right there begun late 1929, ran through 1930 and '31. . . . But the building had been expanded not long before the war broke out. It was very accessible by rail.



*An aerial view of the Greenbrier shows its expansive buildings and grounds and the resort's proximity to the C&O Railway at White Sulphur Springs.*

"So it was easily accessible. I suppose three, four trains a day each way back in this era, a train they called the Sportsman. So one of the questions I'm sometimes asked, why they put an army hospital out in the middle of nowhere. Well it wasn't out in the middle of nowhere, it was really quite accessible. . . . The property was owned then by the C&O, by the Chesapeake and Ohio. They bought it in 1910. They had poured millions of dollars there in the teens to develop the hotel and golf [course]. . . . They also added an airport. . . . So fliers from Langley Field would come and land at this little airport which was adjacent to the golf courses. . . . This airport was in use until eight years ago I believe. It was a grass landing strip. And what happened after the army comes in, they put concrete down. So it becomes another source of access into and out of the hospital.

"Now the Greenbrier of course isn't just about facilities, it's about a certain style. . . . There were golf courses there, not just any golf course, the most delightful golf in America at the Greenbrier. . . . There are real nice golf courses there. . . . There were two 18-hole courses and one 9-hole. . . . Sam Snead was already the pro at that point and had really put the place on the map.

"Okay, so the war breaks out. War is declared after the

attack on Pearl Harbor. The State Department has a problem, and that is that there are hundreds of enemy alien diplomats in Washington, D.C. with their families, their dependents. There are all these staff people that work in the embassies, and just as important, there are hundreds of Americans in Berlin, Tokyo and Rome, and all these guys, all these people, were classified as enemy alien diplomats. So the State Department, a) wanted to negotiate exchanges and get everybody back to their country and, b) wanted to get those diplomats out of Washington for security purposes, for the security of the diplomats because they were diplomats and didn't want anything to happen to them, security also in the sense that it was assumed there were intelligence-gathering agents amongst the diplomats. So the idea was to get them out of town until the negotiations were completed. And the original arrangement was that the Germans and Italians came to the Greenbrier and the Japanese went to . . . the Homestead. The Homestead being the other guys, the competition, the Homestead in Hot Springs, Virginia. The way this arrangement was set up . . . these two resorts, Homestead's about 40 miles from White Sulphur, from the Greenbrier, were relatively close to Washington and easily accessible by rail . . . both isolated, relatively easy to guard, both luxury resorts. This is sort of a goodwill gesture, 'We'll treat those diplomats well in our country and hope that that will lead to good treatment of Americans overseas.' . . . What happens is that apparently the Germans and the Italians at the Greenbrier don't exactly get along real well. So what they do is they take the Italians and move them down to the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina, and then the Japanese move from Hot Springs at Homestead over to the Greenbrier. . . . So the Germans are at the Greenbrier for almost seven months; the Japanese spent three months sitting over there at the Homestead . . . and so finally got to be moved over in April 1942. The Italians go south.

"In lots of discussions about World War II you hear about all the trauma. Well, what sort of always surprises me is life goes on. Life goes on; people get married, you know. . . . There were at least three weddings. Just the other day somebody donated a photo of a German couple getting married during this period. Six babies were born . . . the babies were born over in Clifton Forge, Virginia. The C&O had a hospital there. The Greenbrier consists of a main hotel and . . . 60 or 70 cottages surrounding the hotel building. Some of those cottages were used as classrooms. So the Japanese students were in one row of cottages and the Germans over in another. I've probably met seven, eight, nine people who were children at the time, Japanese, Germans, who've come back over the years. . . . Most of them, all they remember is the swimming pool. You know for them it was seven months of swimming. They had a grand time in the indoor swimming pool.

"This whole thing goes on—it begins December 19, 1941, that's when the first contingent of 159 German diplomats arrived, and then the number increases as it goes along. But what starts happening is not only the diplomats from Washington come down, but then diplomats and dependents from allied countries in Central and South America, Havana and



*Patients, staff, and visitors gather for a photograph inside the Greenbrier Hotel during its use as Ashford General Hospital.*

Bogota start coming up. So the number swells to well over 1,000 people at the resort at one time, and beginning in May the Red Cross works out all the logistics for the exchanges, and people start leaving. . . . If you were a diplomat, incidentally, you were from fairly well-to-do background. So people who came here under this program were people who were used to going places like the Greenbrier. People on the staff used to say, 'We didn't have to tell them how to dress for dinner.' . . . So the last diplomat is out by July 9, 1942.

"The Greenbrier did re-open briefly in six weeks in the summer of 1942, but it closed on September 1. That's the date the U.S. Army bought the Greenbrier and turned it into Ashford General Hospital. . . . Ashford was a reference to an army physician, Bailey K. Ashford. Bailey K. Ashford had worked down in Puerto Rico around the turn of the century, and he died I think in 1934. . . . Again, it's the facilities that are attracting the military leaders. You know the crucial player in all this is George C. Marshall. George Marshall went to Virginia Military Institute up in Lexington, Virginia. He knew the Greenbrier. He knew there were things like a right nice indoor swimming pool, the golf courses that I mentioned, the spa. All these facilities would make it a good army hospital where there was going to be long-term physical therapy and rehabilitation.

"So that would have been part of the physical therapy, swimming in the pool. . . . I can remember meeting patients who had never been in a swimming pool, and the army said, 'Now here's part of your physical therapy. You're gonna' jump in this pool.' And they didn't know how to swim. This one guy I was talking to was there when Esther Williams came to do a production, and apparently when Esther Williams showed up, guys were jumping in left and right. When she was going to teach them how to swim it made a big difference.

"The golf courses are available—all three of them. . . . I think the physicians on staff used these more than anyone else, but it was all part of getting out. This was a major surgical hospital. So soldiers were there four, six, eight months, a long time. A year was not infrequent. And Sam Snead grew up nearby. Sam Snead would come by and Byron Nelson, Jimmy

## VISITING COMMITTEE

### WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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Demaret, Gene Sarazen, all big names in golf in the '40s . . . they would do exhibitions, and again I've met soldiers who learned to play golf from Sam Snead as part of their rehabilitation.

"In terms of physical therapy, probably the most important one was the mineral bath department, bathing in the sulphur water, the mineral water. The reason there is a Greenbrier is because of the baths which started back in the late 18th century.

"If you've been to the Greenbrier, this is the mind-boggling idea, that the main dining room was once a mess hall. . . . I was in the army awhile. . . . They didn't have English crystal chandeliers . . . the main dining room . . . would have been the enlisted men's mess halls. . . . If you went left, the officers were on the other side. One of the amenities at being at Ashford General Hospital was that there was an organ concert each day at noon and then again at five, as you were coming down the elevators to go to the mess halls.

"As you might imagine, every young single woman within 100, 150-mile radius was keenly aware that there were 25,000 GIs coming through Ashford General Hospital. . . . So there would be lots of dances, lots of romances, read about a number of weddings that took place, marriages that started in the Ashford General days.

"One of the ways that the army could afford to maintain this formerly luxurious hotel was through the use of first Italians and later, for a longer period after 1943 and till the end of the war, German prisoners of war . . . they would help operate the hospital.

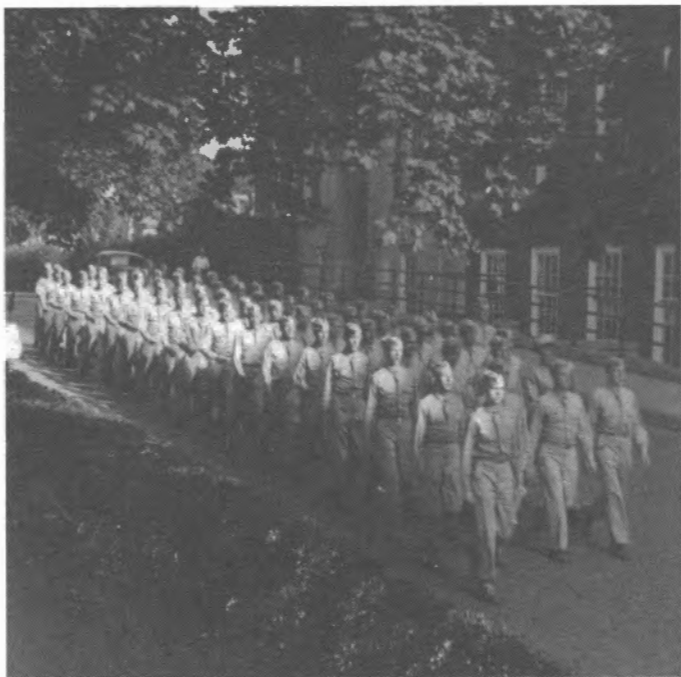
"Now certainly by far all those 25,000 GIs came through, most of them were enlisted personnel, lower ranking officers with serious problems, but of course a lot of attention is paid

to the big names. . . . General Eisenhower was at the hospital three times, once in January of 1944, he'd come back to the States for some planning on the D-Day invasion, and in late 1945 he was quite ill with bronchial pneumonia.

"You know women were certainly at Ashford General, usually as nurses, lots of volunteers, lots of Red Cross personnel. Later in the war some WACs were brought in. . . . [General] Wainwright had been in a Japanese prisoner of war camp for three years. So he returns. They bring him to Ashford General Hospital . . . and then he begins to work on his memoirs with Bob Considine, the sports writer there at Ashford General. . . . Colonel [Clyde] Beck was the commander of the hospital the whole four years it was Ashford General Hospital. Colonel Beck was from Memphis, Tennessee.

"You know, I noticed war talk gets kind of personal, and you know, I was born in 1946. So I don't have any real direct memories of World War II. . . . Part of my growing up and anybody from my generation remembers being young and going through your parents' scrapbooks and seeing these pictures. . . . My parents . . . were married in '42. My father went off to war, and this thing was this big backdrop to my whole life and I'm sure people born in the '40s and '50s, all these tales that my parents and all my aunts and uncles were constantly referring to throughout the '50s and '60s.

"It's '46. Now the war's been over almost a year. The army decides with the loss of POW labor they're going to simply have to give up control . . . the property was sold back to the pre-war owners, the C&O Railway. . . . So that ends the World War II chapter."



*Air cadets march down Prospect Street from their mess in the Men's Residence Halls to their quarters in the Law School building at WVU.*

## Geraldine Vickers Harrison

*Geraldine Harrison is an alumna of West Virginia University, where she obtained her bachelor's degree in 1944 in home economics. She then worked for two years as the 4-H Club agent for Gilmer County from 1944 to 1945. She has also had a career as a school librarian, obtaining her Master of Library Science degree from Rosary College in 1975. This service orientation in her career shows even more strongly in her work as a volunteer for numerous organizations, such as the American Association of University Women for which she served on policy committees at both the state and national levels and the League of Women Voters where she directed her attention to health care issues. As board president of the Covenant House for three years she has provided shelter, food, clothing, health care, and education for those of us in need.*

"What was unusual in the 1940s was being in the University during the most destructive and far-reaching war in history. . . . The entire country was mobilized. High school and college graduates would put on uniforms and would be sent to Europe or the Pacific. The University civilian enrollment in 1943 included 500 men and 820 women. Now during the war years that was a drastic change because the men used to dominate the enrollment.

"Now there was a military enrollment that reached 1,294 plus 24 nursing students, but even with all of that, total enrollment was less than 3,000. . . . There were several others on campus who were taking short courses under a program called Engineering Sciences and Management War Training or ESMWT. Women were enrolled in some of these programs and mostly in the field of radio communications. There was also a course in the repair of small electrical appliances, and this was open to home economics graduates if they cared to enroll. The military on campus were all men at that time. . . . But women were very anxious to be a part of the war effort. One way to do that was to graduate as soon as possible and go to work in a job left vacant by a man in uniform. And so there were many women who took 20 hours a semester, graduated in three and a half years. The University cooperated fully in this effort to get through school and find something to do that would help the war effort.

"Now in March 1943 that wonderful contingent of young air force cadets arrived. . . . They actually did not all arrive at one time. Each contingent had approximately 60 young cadets in it, and they were here for up to five months of training. They were called the 48th College Training Detachment . . . and they would receive classroom instruction before they would go to flight school. They were young. They were cocky. They sang as they marched to and from class, and we noticed. They were housed . . . right here in the Law School, and they ate their meals in the men's residence hall.

"Now to provide some activities for these cadets on Saturday night, Dean Arnold arranged for dances at Elizabeth Moore Hall. The women on campus were asked to serve as hostesses and provide some mountaineer hospitality for these young cadets. . . . At the very first dance in March 1943, I was asked to be one of the hostesses, and here I met PFC Henry Harrison



from Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He was a part of the permanent staff that was assigned to open the cadet program here on campus, and he would stay for 15 months and close out the training program. . . . We were married in April 1946. We returned to Morgantown again, and he graduated in January 1950 from the University. . . . Now not many of the air cadets met and married West Virginia women. The reason they didn't was because they didn't leave them here long enough.

"But they were not about having their fun while they were here. . . . [An] incident occurred at a dance in the ballroom of the Hotel Morgan. One of the cadets had already served a tour of duty overseas and had come back. He was a lot more experienced and mature than most of the other cadets. He came back and was being trained to become a pilot. He was a young Italian from Massachusetts, and he loved to dance. But none of the women students could jitterbug the way he could. So he asked the young black woman who operated the hotel elevator if she would come into the ballroom and jitterbug with him. The ballroom floor was quickly cleared, and for 10 minutes they entertained everyone in a spectacular performance like we had never seen before. . . . The dance went back to normal after the young cadet had had his jitterbug, but the dean of women heard about it the next day and was furious. . . . She contacted the commanding officer of the cadet program and asked that the young man be discharged from the air force and prosecuted for his conduct. Well he did receive a reprimand and walked a few tours out in front of Women's Hall, but hopefully that was the end of it. For those of us who were at the dance, a young cadet helped us forget the war for just a few minutes on one Saturday night.

"And I must say that during the war that the church student groups in Morgantown were invaluable in providing support for students who were going through some very dramatic changes at home. I had two brothers that were in the military service. There was practically no student on campus that was not personally involved with someone who was in uniform. And so when we talk about the military involvement in the war, we sometimes forget that there were women back home—mothers, wives, daughters, sisters—who were just as concerned and worried about what was happening to all those men in uniform wherever they were.

"Many women at the University worked in defense plants through the summer. I worked as a riveter at the Goodrich plant in Akron, Ohio, in the summer of '43. I worked from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. We built fighter planes. . . . I will tell you it was the longest summer of my life. . . . I did not know how monotonous that kind of an assembly line work could be, and I had a great deal of respect and appreciation at the end of that summer for people who do those kinds of jobs over and over again. . . . I learned while I was in Akron that college students were not the best employees because they couldn't keep their minds focused on what they were doing. But I also met that summer a large number of deaf students who worked in the industry, and they were marvelous because the loud noise did not distract them from what they were doing.

"Life was very different on the WVU campus during World War II. It was a time of constant change. It was a time to

reevaluate what was really important. It was a time to look at life and death in light of reality."

## Earl Summers, Jr.

*Earl Summers, Jr., is a musician and orchestra concertmaster whose credits include the Wheeling Symphony of which he was a charter member in 1929 and manager from 1948 to 1990, first violinist of the Caldwell String Quartet, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Opera and Pittsburgh Ballet orchestras, concertmaster for the It's Wheeling Steel radio program and the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera Orchestra. He also had his own Earl Summers, Jr., Orchestra from 1945 to 1964. For the past few years he has performed as a free-lance musician, including playing for the Moody Blues the night before the forum.*

"I started out in the radio business about 1930, and I was with WWVA on their staff doing commercials and more or less free-lancing until the Wheeling Steel program started in 1936. I graduated from high school in 1934. At that time my dad and I were working at WWVA, and John Grimes, who was the advertising manager at Wheeling Steel, approached radio station program director Pat Patterson—Walter Patterson—had this idea for a radio show. The original idea was to have . . . various groups in the factories . . . little, small combos . . . singers and instrumentalists, accordion players mostly, to give them a chance to get on the show and sort of promote public relations between the employees and management . . . they wanted a band that could play all types of music. So out of the talent available in Wheeling at that time, we organized a band composed of some dance musicians, some symphony musicians so we could play the spectrum. So we came out for the very first program, and that was in 1936 we played at that time mostly published arrangements. . . . The first program was on November 8, 1936, and we were broadcasting over station WWVA in Wheeling, WPAY in Portsmouth, Ohio. Now the reason for the Portsmouth, Ohio, radio station, there was a Wheeling Steel plant also in Portsmouth, which was a pretty big plant. . . .

"Now in 1937 they decide to go a little stronger, so they hired an arranger. . . . He started to stylize the orchestra. He wrote capsule arrangements of classical music that we played . . . and he adopted them so we could play them with a 16-piece orchestra. And we also did some of the jazz arrangements that he re-wrote. . . . So they went to the Mutual Broadcasting station . . . that was based at WOR in Newark, New Jersey. So we were on five stations, including WOR, WWVA and WLW in Cincinnati. . . .

"At that time they added a girls' trio . . . and the Taylor quartet called the Singing Millmen, who were composed of people that worked at the mills. They added a singing stenographer by the name of Sarah Reed. . . . At the end of the season in '39 they invited us to go to the world's fair in Flushing Meadows, New York, and we performed at the Court of Peace in Flushing Meadows on June 25. It was supposed to represent West Virginia Day. . . . At that time we also added Regina Colbert, who was another singing secretary. . . . And then the Steele Sisters . . . had a chance to go with Horace



*The cast of It's Wheeling Steel looks on as members of the army, navy, and American Legion present Wheeling Steel Corporation with an E-Award for war production in 1942.*

Heidt. So they went with him for about a year, and in the meantime they filled in with a group of sisters from Martins Ferry, who were daughters of Wheeling Steel employees . . . the Evans Sisters . . . they performed until the Steele Sisters came back, and . . . they organized a chorus, and we had the Millmen; we had Jean and Her Boyfriends.

"Well that kept on until about 1941, and Wheeling Steel decided to go even bigger. So in 1941 we joined the NBC Blue Network. . . . At that time we went from 23 and eventually 27 stations coast to coast. And from 1941 when we went on the Blue Network, they were advertising all Wheeling Steel products and everything, and then came Pearl Harbor Day. . . . At that time there was a complete reversal of advertising and everything on the program. We had a performance on Pearl Harbor Day. We had a rehearsal in the morning. We had all gone home between the rehearsal, and then we had a five o'clock broadcast that afternoon. While we were at home, we heard the news of Pearl Harbor on the radio. Right after our dinner we went back and did the performance on December 7 . . . and we found out later that it was preempted and never appeared on the network. . . . But from that day on, the whole program was to sell war bonds. They quit promoting the products they had, and in fact the whole Wheeling Steel Corporation switched their policy. Instead of manufacturing their regular line, they started manufacturing landing mats. They had big five-gallon gasoline cans that they produced. They had shields for the bombs and sheets of sheet metal that went on the planes. . . . And during the war they were commended by the navy.

"The main thing we did during the war was go on bond tours. We went to practically every city in West Virginia. We went to Wheeling. We went to Clarksburg. We went to Fairmont. We went to Parkersburg, The biggest one was here at the University. We played at the old Field House. . . . At

that time, what we did in these cities, we tried to promote enough money to buy a bomber. . . . At that time I think a medium bomber ran \$175,000. A B-17 ran \$300,000, and in all these cities we raised enough money to either buy a B-17 or a medium bomber. In fact, when we were here at the WVU Field House, we raised \$663,000, which was about \$12 a person for everybody that lived in the county. . . . We went to Steubenville, Ohio. We went to Bridgeport, Ohio. We made a tour up to Great Lakes Naval Training Station. . . . We broadcast from the Taft Auditorium on WLW, Cincinnati. . . . These were all bond tours.

"But all the things that I've done over the years, and I've been in the business professionally since 1930. . . . I think this was possibly the biggest thing in my life. It shaped my life more than anything, and it was a wonderful thing for the war effort because they raised a lot of money. They raised a lot of morale for the troops."

## WEST VIRGINIA AND WORLD WAR II

Since childhood, I have heard about the exceptional patriotism of West Virginians and their roles in the various wars. This was especially true of the Civil War and World War II. These seemed to have made the biggest impressions upon the families I knew. Growing up in Randolph County, vestiges of the Civil War were all around. It literally took place in our backyards—my brother once found a grape shot near our house. Even my young friends were aware of the battles in which their ancestors fought and whether they were Confederate or Union. World War II was another matter. Its participants were and still are with us. Although the Vietnam War was ongoing during my childhood, its effects were distant until a friend or family member died in the conflict. World War II affected everybody, those who served in the armed forces and those at

home, and its effects remained with us during my youth. Even the servicemen I knew who served in the Vietnam War looked to those of World War II for their models of bravery, sacrifice, and devotion.

As a child in Elkins, I quickly noticed that most of the businessmen, school teachers, and public officials were veterans or wives of veterans, many of whom had worked on the home front during the war. The World War II generation was at its zenith. Wartime service seemed to qualify the members of that generation for leadership. Their stories dominated the folklore of the time. Uncles, neighbors, and teachers told about their war experiences—whether it be taking shelter in a tomb during a torrential rain on Okinawa, piloting B-24 bombers over the Himalayas, where weather was the greatest enemy, or serving at the local USO club. I learned bits of information and trivia that is hard to find in the history books—that the effects of malaria are lifelong, Dutch farmers could save a soldier's frostbitten feet through a folk cure, one must look before he leaps into just any hole during an air raid, and officers on at least one Pacific island did not allow black troops to keep their weapons outside of actual battle.

The stories also told of a sense of pride and camaraderie among West Virginians. The state's service people seemed to have a knack for staying together and reuniting in the midst of war. In some cases, this was intentional, and in others it was purely coincidental. War correspondent Howard Chernoff of Charleston commented on the fact that West Virginians seemed to turn up everywhere during his tour of the European Theatre in 1944. He published the stories of his contacts with state residents in the book *Anybody Here from West Virginia?* Even famed broadcaster Edward R. Murrow noted the proclivity for West Virginians to get together in wartime. He wrote to Chernoff, "In some ways I envied you your assignment in the ETO [European Theatre of Operations]. You just turned up at an airfield or at the front and voiced your battle cry, 'Anybody Here From West Virginia?' and at once you were surrounded with fine looking soldiers and comely, competent nurses."

West Virginia esprit de corps found its way into many stories that I heard when I was young. In one family tale, an uncle entered the army and went through training with a boyhood friend. The two parted after training. The uncle went to a combat engineer battalion, and his friend was assigned to the aviation engineers. Whether the army intentionally put men from the same area together or whether it was sheer accident, the friend ended up in a unit with another uncle. By total coincidence and diplomacy, still a third uncle managed to get leave from a passing troop ship to visit his brother in the aviation engineers. It was like old home week as the two brothers, the friend of the absent brother, and yet another Randolph Countian celebrated their reunion on a South Pacific island.

On another occasion, a neighbor once told of an army air force training unit in New Mexico that included a contingent of West Virginians. According to the story, men from the camp kept losing fights with locals during weekend passes. An exasperated commanding officer jokingly told the men that he might have to send the West Virginians into town to



*West Virginians contributed to the war effort in many ways. A Roane County cattle breeder donated proceeds from the sale of this Hereford bull calf to the Second War Loan Campaign. A group of Charleston businessmen bought the bull at an auction in Spencer for \$535,000.*

"take care of things" if the fighting continued.

Such accounts of spirit and togetherness are common across the state and extend to the home front. During research for this year's West Virginia Day, I was reminded of the sacrifices and service of the people in the state. From Newell to Bluefield and Harpers Ferry to Kenova, West Virginians served in the organizations such as the state guard, the American Women's Voluntary Services, Citizens Service Corps and Citizens Defense Corps. They donated to the Civilian Defense Fund, participated in bond campaigns, worked with the Red Cross, and gave books for use in USO clubs and military hospitals. They drank Postum and chicory to save the coffee ration and patched and re-patched their shoes and tires. The list of contributions and sacrifices is endless. I discovered that, whether it be the neighborhoods surrounding the chemical plants in the Kanawha Valley or the small county seat town of Sutton, communities drilled for air raids as if the enemy was just next door in Ohio.

A mixture of soberness and delight overtook me as I looked at the civil defense records of Monongalia County. There I found a map of downtown Morgantown with the locations of air raid sirens and wardens' posts. I discovered the personnel cards of former neighbors in Westover who served as air raid wardens and fire watchers during the war.

A tinge of humor entered my mind as I looked at a collection of propaganda posters with their admonitions to keep quiet about military information, insulate your home, and donate your blood to help the war effort. I saw bizarre caricatures of Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo. How odd it seems that similar posters urged my father and his fellow residents in the mountain valley town of Mill Creek to capture or kill the dictators if they saw them in their community. But these posters rallied the people and made them feel a part of the fighting.

West Virginians joined to "buy" tanks, bombers, and jeeps

in their war bond drives. They kept the enemy from achieving a victory, albeit indirectly, by preventing forest fires that would destroy timber and tie up men during the wartime labor shortage. Women were made to feel a kinship with the troops when they saved their kitchen grease, tin cans, and waste paper. Posters showed them how the materials were transformed and used as bullets, explosives, and wrappings for artillery shells.

It may be hard in hindsight to remember or understand the sense of urgency and uncertainty that gripped the country during World War II. Yet the unknown course of the future caused Americans to unite in support of the armed forces and in preparation for the worst possible scenario of attack and invasion. West Virginians joined that effort, and the history of the state changed as the lives of the people changed. When the war ended, it left a legacy of caution, sacrifice, and patriotism in the minds of West Virginians. It also ushered in an era of greater sophistication and modern technology and bore a new generation of leaders. Last, but not least, it robbed West Virginia of many of its young citizens and left others disabled. Such a historical legacy evokes reflection and remembrance of World War II.

—Randall S. Gooden, Editor

## SELECTED RECENT ACCESSIONS

**Allen, James W. F. Papers, 1832-1887. 3 items. Gift of Frances Carroll, Gainesville, Fl., 1994. A&M 2257 Addendum.**

An 1835 law memorandum book, 1836 certificate of recommendation from the Woodstock, Virginia Presbyterian Church to the one at Moorefield, and transcriptions of Allen letters in the West Virginia Collection comprise this gift. James W. F. Allen was a circuit court judge and legislator during the antebellum and post-Reconstruction periods.



**American Association of University Women. Morgantown Branch. Archives, 1954-1987. 2 ft. Gift of Morgantown Branch, 1994. A&M 1485 Addendum.**

These official historical records supplement earlier records of the organization held at the West Virginia Collection. They include booklets detailing the activities and organization of the group, notes on the history of the branch and general association, press releases, constitutions and bylaws, correspondence, news-clippings, and conference packets.

**Davis, Thomas B. Papers, 1896-1913. 61 items. Gift of Thomas R. Ross, Elkins, 1994. A&M 3197.**

The bulk of these papers consists of correspondence during Davis' service in the House of Representatives from 1905 to 1907. They also include items related to his business and land dealings and those of associates. Davis was connected with his brother, Henry Gassaway Davis, in his business enterprises and in Democratic politics. He was a resident of Elkins and was elected to fill the unexpired congressional term of Alston G. Dayton, who had been appointed as a federal judge.



*A laboratory at Storer College at Harpers Ferry. Established during Reconstruction, the black school was one of several West Virginia colleges that received support from John D. Rockefeller's General Education Board.*

**General Education Board-West Virginia Section. Archives, 1901-1967. 3 reels. Gift of West Virginia Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, WVU, 1994. A&M 3193.**

The General Education Board was the institution that administered John D. Rockefeller's donations to schools after 1901. The records of the board have been microfilmed by the Rockefeller Archives Center and made available for purchase. These three reels contain the records for the West Virginia Section of the board. The General Education Board funded building construction, equipment purchases, and teacher salaries at West Virginia State College and Storer College, two black schools, and reports of conditions at Storer College are included in the records. Bethany, Salem, Morris Harvey, Davis and Elkins, and West Virginia Wesleyan colleges and West Virginia University also received aid. In addition, vocational education, extension courses, and education in the coal fields is discussed. The material includes correspondence, reports, statistics, maps, photographs, and pamphlets.

**Murphy, John Burns. Collection, 1770-1988. 3 vols. Gift of Peggy J. Robinson, Grafton, 1994. A&M 3199.**

Genealogist John Burns Murphy compiled these volumes of family group records and photographs. They focus on the area of Barbour and Taylor counties and include 187 families. Twelve photographs depict the William and Hester Murphy family of Moatsville. Each volume is indexed.

**Paull, Archibald W. Notebook, ca. 1861. 1 vol. Transfer from Ohio County Court Records, 1994. A&M 152.**

These notes were taken by Wheeling resident Archibald W. Paull in classes at Washington College in Washington, Pennsylvania. Paull completed his formal education at the college after attending Wheeling's Linsly Institute and studying with private tutors. He came from an leading family in the area; his father, James W. Paull, served as a justice on the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. Archibald W. Paull became a prominent Wheeling glass manufacturer during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He owned Nail City Stamping Company.

**West Fork River. Map, 1898. 14" x 29". Purchase from Prints Old and Rare, San Francisco, 1994. Map.**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers survey of West Fork River between Clarksburg and its mouth, including an inset of Clarksburg. The black, green and white map shows sites of proposed locks and dams and notes elevation and pool depth of the river.

**West Virginia University Centennial Committee. Records, 1966. 53 items. Transfer from Curator, West Virginia Collection, 1994. A&M 2069 Addendum.**

West Virginia Collection curator Charles Shetler served on WVU's Centennial Committee and kept these records in his office files. The correspondence and notes relate to ideas for the centennial celebration in 1967, particularly the production of a film. Much of the correspondence is with WVU's Office of Development.

**Williams, Mary. Scrapbook, 1924-1928. 1 vol. Gift of Evelyn Kocher, Morgantown, 1994. A&M 3200.**

The scrapbook documents the rise of a noted regional singer during the 1920s. Mary Williams of Morgantown began her career singing in church choirs in Morgantown and Fairmont. She attended West Virginia University and was a member of the University Choir. She gained the attention of choir director Louis Black and music faculty member Frank Delli-Gatti, and they encouraged her to pursue her music. Williams appeared at concerts and recitals throughout the state and region, usually accompanied by Delli-Gatti on the violin. Her ambitions

eventually led her to seek voice instruction from Oscar Saenger and Marcella Sembrich.



*Congressman Cleveland M. Bailey*

**Williams, Phyllis Stealey. Scrapbooks, 1925-1962. 4 vols. Deposit from John E. Stealey III, Shepherdstown, 1994. A&M 3202.**

Phyllis Stealey Williams kept these scrapbook accounts of her social and family life, travels, involvement in Democratic politics, and work as administrative assistant to Congressman Cleveland M. Bailey. The first book includes much material on World War II and the home front. The other three books cover Williams' years with Bailey, 1955 through 1962.

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*West Virginia U.S.O. volunteers place telephone calls for soldiers at the Y.M.C.A. in Elkins. The troops were training in the area for mountain warfare. Read more about West Virginia and World War II in this special edition of the NEWSLETTER.*