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“Indians, Explorers and Pioneers,”
West Virginia Day 1991

West Virginia was a pretty rugged place a couple of centuries ago, and so were the people who settled here. Indeed, according to one historian, we would probably flee at the sight of our own ancestors if we could go back in time to meet them.

The roughhewn nature of the early settlers was just one of the points that surfaced during the 5th annual West Virginia Day Celebration on June 20, 1991. This year’s celebration was dedicated to exploring the early settlement era in West Virginia history.

The day began with a historical forum in the Regional History Collection’s Robert C. Byrd Reading Room. Five speakers collectively painted a picture of a harsh world dominated by Indians and soldiers, trappers and keelboatmen.

Susan Yohe, curator of the Grave Creek Mound State Park, led the way with a description of the rise and fall of the prehistoric Adena and Hopewell Indian cultures and the monuments that they left behind. Visiting Committee member Joe Jeffers followed with a biographical sketch of two very different frontier women: a Shawnee woman known as “the Grenadier Squaw,” and Frances Hunter Arbuckle Lawrence Welch, the matriarch of prominent settlers.

This year’s exhibit featured nearly one hundred artifacts, maps and documents, including a knife which belonged to pioneer Lewis Wetzel, a half-dozen colonial maps of Virginia and a land document transferring ownership of approximately 250,000 acres of land in Monongalia County.

Face painting, old-time music and a demonstration of Native American weaponry were but a few of the activities that kept the younger generation of West Virginia Day celebrants entertained.

Ray Swick, historian for the West Virginia state park system, next presented a stirring expose on frontier living conditions. With a graphic description of the populace and medical and sanitary conditions, Swick proved rather convincingly that frontier life was not for the frail or modest.

The program concluded with presentations by Emory Kemp, director of the WVU Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, and John Douglas, novelist and editor of the Berkeley Springs Morgan Messenger. Kemp educated listeners about the profound importance of wood in early America while Douglas spoke of his struggle to discern and convey the essence of West Virginia people in his writings.

As the forum drew to a close, the scene of action shifted to the Mountainlair, where an enthusiastic crowd assembled for the 11:00 a.m. opening of this year’s theme exhibit, “Indians, Explorers and Pioneers.” Featured along with an impressive array of early maps and documents was an assortment of Indian relics, artifacts which once belonged to Daniel Boone, Lewis Wetzel and Margaret Blennerhassett, and several fine examples of 18th century West Virginia glass, pottery and other manufactured items.

A birthday picnic, a book reading by author John Douglas and a full slate of children’s activities rounded out the day.
WVU Press to Publish Historic Diaries

The West Virginia University Press resumes publication this fall with the printing of diaries of two famous West Virginians. John W. Davis, attorney and diplomat, is the only West Virginian ever to run for President of the United States; and Julia Davis Adams, his daughter, is a well-known author of 22 books.

John W. Davis was born in Clarksburg in 1873. After receiving his LL.B. in 1895 from Washington and Lee University, he was admitted to the West Virginia Bar and began practicing law in Clarksburg with his father. In 1899, he was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates, where he became chair of the judiciary committee. Elected to the U.S. Congress in 1910, he continued to develop a distinguished career in judiciary matters. Woodrow Wilson appointed him Solicitor General of the U.S. in 1913. In this position, he made 124 appearances before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Davis was appointed U.S. Ambassador to the Court of Saint James (Great Britain) by President Wilson for a term from 1918-21, where he assisted his government in drafting the armistice agreement ending World War I. To recognize his many contributions to peace and international relations, the Admiralty sent a convoy of mine destroyers flying the Stars and Stripes to escort his ship upon his departure from England—an honor unduplicated before or since. Davis received twelve honorary degrees from institutions such as West Virginia University, the University of Glasgow (Scotland), University of Birmingham (England), Yale, Brown, and Oxford. He died in 1955.

The John W. Davis diary will be entitled “The Ambassadorial Diary of John W. Davis: The Court of St. James’s 1918–1921.” Mrs. Adams will edit her father’s diary.

Julia Davis Adams is the twelfth child of John W. and Julia McDonald Davis. She was born in 1900 in Clarksburg and was raised by grandmothers and aunts, having lost her mother shortly after her birth. Her early childhood years were spent in Clarksburg with visits to Media, the Jefferson County 18th century farmhouse where her maternal grandparents lived.

Educated at Wellesley and Barnard colleges, Mrs. Adams began her literary career as a feature writer with the Associated Press in New York. She wrote her first novel, The Swords of the Vikings, in 1928. Three additional books quickly followed: Viano: A Boy of New Finland, Mountains Are Free, and Remember and Forget. Some of her other titles include No Other White Men, the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Ride With the Eagle, A Valley of Song, and Legacy of Love, the memoirs of her family and life in Clarksburg, which was re-issued in 1987 by the Harrison County Historical Society. Her most recent work, Beyond the Shenandoah and the Potomac, was published in 1990. She has also written mysteries under the pseudonym F. Draco.

Julia Davis Adams' diary will be entitled “The Embassy Girls.” The diary recounts her memoirs of her father's ambassadorial years from her perspective as a teenage girl.

The publication announcement was made by WVU President, Neil Bucklew, on June 20, 1991, during the West Virginia Day luncheon held at Erickson Alumni Center. Mrs. Adams and several of her family members attended the celebration of the state’s 128th birthday.
When we say Indian, everybody develops a mental picture... of people with feathers, Cochise, all of those people we saw the Cavalry fighting. That is not at all what the Adena people were. To understand these people, let's go back 8000 years before the birth of Christ, let's round it up to 10,000 years ago. They migrated over the frozen barren straits... 10,000 years ago the last time earth went through an ice age. Some of them stopped in Colorado, we call those people cliff dwellers, and others eventually ended up in the Ohio and Mississippi Valley. (We call) these people... the Adena and Hopewell Indians. Now that's not a name that they left us. This is no tribal name. The name Adena comes from a doctor who lived on a farm in Adena, Ohio, who did the first extensive study of the early woodland culture.

Once they got here... the Adena] began to develop village sites and no longer were Nomads... At the same time in history that the Turks were building mounds, that Stonehenge was built, that the Egyptians were building pyramids, the people of India were burying their people in structures pointing toward the earth, there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of little burial mounds, and these were destroyed as white men came through and formed countries. Grave Creek, which was built in two stages between 250 and 100 years B.C. [survived] simply because of its size...

What happened to these people? We're not sure... There are several theories. One theory is that... a great natural disaster wiped them out. Another theory is that... a plague of some type wiped them out... There is a third theory. We know that the copper that they used to make jewelry came from southern Great Lake Superior, [and that] the mica that they used to make ornamental stuff came from the Carolinas... so then we have to assume that they traded with other people. And probably what happened to them is... was a gradual process of intermarrying so that one culture merged into another one...

Now, let's talk about Grave Creek Mound itself because it has a unique history in West Virginia. Along about 1790 a man by the name of Joseph Tomlinson was granted all of the land in western Virginia that's in Marshall County, West Virginia, now. And he moved there with his wife Elizabeth, and he named the settlement Elizabethtown. He farmed the land, and he was a surveyor by trade. One day he was out deer hunting, he kept a really nice diary, by the way, and he came upon a mound. He recognized immediately it was not a natural hill... so he protected it. As time went on, he died and left it to his son, who died and left it to his son... About 1840... Jesse Tomlinson, the grandson of Joseph, was drinking his coffee and reading his newspaper one morning, he came across on the front of the page that they had excavated a pyramid and lo and behold what did they find when they excavated the pyramid. Well, even today if you were so lucky to own the inside of a pyramid you could be very wealthy. So he got together with his cousin, Abram, and they started digging. They didn't find anything that going to make them wealthy, because you know these people didn't bury with tons and tons of artifacts. They found some mica and some copper beads... and some made of sandstone and flint arrowheads, maybe a few of those, but nothing that was going to make them wealthy. But [their discoveries]... perked the interest of the big city professors from the east, and they started coming into the little community...

In 1908 the state of West Virginia purchased it for $18,000 and declared it a state park... and in the 30's... a little museum (was built) adjacent to it... In 1964 Grave Creek Mound was declared a National Historic Landmark, and may I add, the very first declared National Historic Landmark in the state of West Virginia.
The Indian was named Non-hel-e-ma... but she was called the "Grenadier Squaw" because she was very tall, and very erect, and the soldiers thought she walked like a Grenadier. She had been baptized, probably up in western Pennsylvania by one of the Moravian or Quaker missionaries, and they'd given her the name Katherine, and she was called Katty sometimes.

When the Army of Virginians under Col. Andrew Lewis defeated, at the Battle of Point Pleasant on October 10, 1774, an almost equal number of Indians under the leadership of the Shawnee chief Keigh-tugh-gua, organized Indian resistance to white settlement in southern West Virginia was reduced but serious unrest continued for several years. In the fall of 1777, evidences of an Indian uprising, backed by the British, were rampant... On November 10, 1777, Cornstalk, who had been detained at Fort Randolph, was murdered by a mob of raw Virginians recruits who... had witnessed the killing and scalping of one of their number across the river... This inflamed the Indians, and the troubles that had been going on increased. Now the event which focuses our attention on the Grenadier Squaw occurred six months later. Non-hel-e-ma was a sister of Cornstalk, and she was a woman of importance in her own right. She had her own village, she was chief of that village... She had moved to Fort Randolph, bringing with her nearly 50 cattle, horses, and other property, and was in the fort in May 1778, when an Indian force reported to be 300 strong approached and demanded surrender. After managing to replenish the fort's water supply, Capt. William McKee... sent the Grenadier Squaw to tell the Indians that the fort would resist... The deposition of one of the soldiers states:... "The Shawnees mustered all their strength and besieged Pt. Pleasant several days. They killed Patty Sherman, and wounded Lt. Gilmer. Finding they could not take the fort, they killed all the stock of the garrison and then started for the Greenbrier settlements. We knew of this from the Grenadier Squaw who... went out with spirits and became intoxicated, but overheard the Indians and told the officers of their plan."

After two other soldiers had started out but had turned back, heroic Philip Hammon and John Pryor were dressed Indian style by the Grenadier Squaw and managed to reach Greenbrier before the Indians, and warn the settlers. The settlements in Greenbrier had been destroyed by Cornstalk and his band in 1763, but this time... the Indians] found that the people of the area had gathered within the block house. By desperate effort, the attack was held off... until the force from Lewisburg, headed by Captain Arbuckle, Col. Sam Lewis, and Capt. John Stewart arrived and relieved the siege... We don't know why the Grenadier Squaw] adopted the white settlers and cooperated with them, leaving her own people, at least temporarily, and living among the whites. I suppose she was influenced by the missionaries. Little is known about Katty and her family. She is said to have been a sister of Cornstalk, yet she was living at Fort Randolph a few months after he was murdered. She may well have been a sister of Cornstalk's half-brother, who succeeded him as principal leader of the Shawnees. Although there is no mention at any time of a consort, she had a daughter, Fanny, or Pawnee, who was with her at Fort Randolph... She may have had some trouble getting along with the other frontier women... [one of whom] said she was "not of very good character, a blackguard." And General Hand, who commanded at Fort Pitt,... discounted information given by the Grenadier Squaw because of "her implacable hatred of the woman who lived with McKee."

Soon after the raid on Greenbrier, the Grenadier Squaw moved to a place near Fort Pitt. In 1785, she petitioned the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for a grant of land on the Scioto near where she had formerly lived... but [Congress] never acted on it... She is said to have been one of the Indians captured in 1786 when Col. Benjamin Logan led a raid on the Indian villages on Mad River in Ohio... I've found no other references to this woman. Her fate, the fate of her daughter, are lost in history...

Now for the second woman—Frances Hunter Lawrence Arbuckle Welch. Frances Hunter, daughter of Scotsman John Hunter and English-born Frances Morton, was born March 10, 1750. According to tradition, her birth took place on a wooden sailing ship enroute from Scotland to this country. Brought up in the valley of Virginia, she at age 16 first married 18-year-old John Lawrence, Jr., of Augusta County, by whom she had one daughter, Elizabeth, who was said to have died as an infant. In the fall of 1773 the young husband died as a result of wounds inflicted by the Indians.

In December 1774, in Botetourt County, Virginia, Frances married a second time, Capt. Matthew Arbuckle, himself a widower. Capt. Arbuckle had commanded a company of Botetourt County militia, served as guide and chief scout for General Andrew Lewis' army on their march to Pt. Pleasant and had served with distinction in that battle on October 17, 1774... Little is known of their life together. Frances Hunter raised the two sons of Capt. Arbuckle's first wife, had four Arbuckle sons of her own, the oldest of these, James, said to have been born in the fort at Lewisburg during an Indian attack. Arbuckle was away for much of their short married life on duty as commanding officer at Fort Randolph, Pt. Pleasant, on trips to Williamsburg and acting as a surveyor, frontier scout, and trapper. The Arbuckles had a several-hundred-acre farm just south of Lewisburg with a number of slaves, and we can be sure that in managing the establishment and rearing 6 healthy boys, she showed strength, stamina, intelligence, and courage.

The great Shawnee chief Cornstalk was the Grenadier Squaw's brother.
On June 27, 1781, returning from a surveying trip to Bath County, Virginia, Capt. Arbuckle was killed by a falling tree in a storm. So in Lewisburg on March 11, 1783, the widow Arbuckle married Alexander Welch, her third husband, a surveyor and native of Scotland. By Welch she had four more children, a son and 3 daughters.

Now our clearest picture of this great lady is contributed by Anne Royall... who wrote in 1824 that "Mrs. Welch [is] the most extraordinary woman I ever saw. She has been and is now possessed with much personal beauty. Although this female has spent her life in the western wiles of America, often running from the Indians, and cooped up in forts among people as rude as the savages themselves, yet she is eminently qualified to have gone to the most polished assembly. Her pleasant and courtly manners are unequalled and every way bewitching; with a mind unimpaired. She's had 10 children, she possesses all the gaiety and springliness of youth, but her predominant trait is benevolence. God knows what she must have been in her youth for she is irresistible now. ... There are a few people in whom we do not see something to admire, but on Mrs. Welch nature has bestowed the choicest of her gifts."

Frances Welch died July 25, 1834. ... I would like to have known both of them. I know that Frances Welch has lots of descendants. I wonder if there are any descendants of the Grenadier Squaw.

Ray Swick
Historian of the West Virginia state park system

The frontier period of the Ohio Valley roughly between 1770 and 1820... is, to borrow a phrase coined by British historians, a world we have lost, one which has been so completely forgotten that it might as well have never existed. ... We forget that people who lived two centuries ago where we now call home here in the Ohio Valley were very different from us. They had different speech patterns, their intonations were different, their mannerisms were different, they even wore their clothes differently and paced their movements differently. But they had a way of life which flourished greatly, so let us briefly try to consider the environment that it enjoyed, and some of its customs and habits.

First of all, the land was vastly different in the Ohio Valley. When the Blennerhassetts first arrived there in the late 1790s, they were absolutely astonished at what they saw. Ireland had been denuded of its timber for at least a century. ... When [the Blennerhassetts] were coming across the Pennsylvania mountains and they looked down, they must have felt the same feeling that many other travelers did record at the time, that it was like looking down at the waves of the ocean. ... We have many records that tell us that the trees were absolutely monstrous in the frontier Ohio Valley. ... Often on the frontier, settlers moving into the area too late in the season to build a log cabin because winter had set in would find a hollow tree and move into it and live in it through the year. In one case down in Jackson County the family liked the tree home so well that they just built the cabin next to it and used the tree as a room in the cabin. The trees were not only monstrous but the wild grapevines that grew up around them also were. ... The grapevines would grow around the tree trunks, growing upwards seeking light and air until they formed over the tree tops, what the botanists called crown canopy, we would just say a roof of interwoven grapevines that was so thick that the sunlight could not reach the forest floor year round. You can imagine settlers coming from the civilized east over the mountains to carve out their new farms in the forest and having to live in this darkness year around. It was especially hard on the women. Many of them, in fact, in the end couldn't stand it; they had nervous breakdowns. Not only did they have to live in darkness 12 months out of the year, but they were miles away from their nearest neighbors, and in many cases had left their loved ones across the mountains in the east. ... In the frontier Ohio Valley the farmers had problems with predators. One of the most serious was squirrels which came down from the north every year and they would just run over everything. They would devour the crops in the fields, and the farmers would fight back, but they would come in such numbers that they couldn't be resisted, and when they came to the Ohio River, they just swam across and a large number of them drowned. ... The area of the Ohio Valley was like the United Nations in the 1780s, and early 19th century. It was a multiplicity of ethnic groups. You found there French, English, Irish, German, Canadian, African, Indian, Scots, New Englanders (who were called Yankees), Southerners, especially in our area down around the mouth of the Little Kanawha that fions into the Ohio, Virginians, and they had their own particular name, they were called Tohees and Tuckahoes. Tuckahoes were the Virginians east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Tohees were the Virginians west of the Blue Ridge. ... Dialects were much thicker in some cases than they are now. Each group had its own accent, of course, so it did give the image of a little United Nations in the Ohio Valley. ...
Originally constructed in 1798-1800, the Blennerhassett mansion was burned to the ground in 1811. It was reconstructed in 1984-1991 on the original foundation by the West Virginia state park system.

In the Ohio Valley in the frontier period, there was an almost oriental distance between the two extremes of the standards of living at the time. In America, and especially in Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Everything encouraged it. There were no income taxes. There was not attached to wealth at that time the guilt there is today when the Third World is pressing our gates. . . .

Two of the cheapest aspects of life in the Ohio Valley from 1770 to 1820 are two of the most expensive today. One is children and the other is food. There was no birth control in the 1800s in the Ohio Valley. One traveler going down the river remarked how children swarmed like squirrels around the cabin that he passed on the way. Personal standards were vastly different then than they are now. For example there was little squeamishness about male nudity in the frontier Ohio Valley, and it appeared not uncommonly in the persons of keelboatmen, slaves, Indians, and the white men who acted as scouts in the 1790s Indian war that raged in the entire length of the Ohio valley. Individuals were not so delicate about their bodies and the lack of privacy was taken for granted. . . .

Women, of course, were second class citizens who could not vote and daughters never received a college education, for that was the private preserve of boys. Women essentially wore baby and work machine. In fact in colonial America due to the incessant childbearing and hard work expected of women, a man could commonly go through four or five wives in his lifetime. A housewife looked haggard and middle-aged by her 30s. The proper concept of feminine beauty was different in the 18th and early 19th centuries than today. Sickness, continual childbearing, and hard work ravaged women's faces and bodies. . . . In the 18th century, however, a lady often was considered attractive, or even beautiful, according to her manners, and the clothes that she wore, not merely the contours of her face. . . .

A lady [once wrote to me], "You know, if all of us could get a big time machine and go back and meet our ancestors face to face. . . . we'd probably flee from them in a body because they would look so rough and unhewn." I think that I would like to go back in a time machine to the frontier Ohio Valley and meet some of these people whom we've been told about, but as soon as I had a toothache I'd want to come back to the 20th century.

We're celebrating a birthday of June 20, 1863. . . . I want to go back even earlier, though, and talk about another celebration . . .

The Blennerhassett's world was a silent one compared to what noises assault our ears today that we have to endure. Probably the loudest man-made noise came from the shipyard at Marietta, the blacksmith's anvils, or the boatman's horn, maybe the horn tooted by the post boy as he rode through the settlements.

Another aspect of life which we today in 1991 would find absolutely impossible to understand was the extreme isolation in which people were forced to live. . . . It took months for news to filter in from other parts of the country, even national events. People's existence was monotonous and often very lonely, and really, as you look back and read history about the frontier settlers of the Ohio Valley, you've got to pity them, because what did they have for entertainment—they only had each other. . . .

We have to face the fact that men and women of the late 18th and early 19th centuries were better men and women than we are, at least when it comes to physical suffering. They had to endure pain that we cannot even imagine today. To give you a good example, one of the outstanding ladies, early settlers of Marietta, Ohio, was Lucy Backus Woodbridge. . . . Lucy, in one of her letters, commented on the fact that she had developed an abscessed tooth. This was about 1804 in Marietta. Of course there were no dentists to go to, so she had to go to the doctor. And the doctor evidently wasn't too skilled because in trying to yank out this abscessed tooth he managed to fracture her jaw to the width of three fingers, she said. So she had to go back home and let her jaw heal before he could have another whack at pulling out her abscessed tooth. I think of that story every time I go to the dentist and he approaches with the needle and I start whimpering. . . .

One of the outstanding ladies, early settlers of Marietta, Ohio, was Lucy Backus Woodbridge.
Erected in 1852, the Philippi Covered Bridge was destroyed by fire on February 2, 1989. It is currently being reconstructed under Dr. Kemp's supervision.

n what this wooden age that still remembers for the astute observer. If we are to find the social meaning which Dr. Swick alluded to we have to encounter wood and it is necessary then to understand the historic technology associated with the wooden age.

Since wood is such a versatile material it was utilized in virtually every aspect of domestic, commercial and industrial life. To name just a few of the applications of wood, we find buildings in, of course, the American romantic vision of the log house, but also the heavy timber frame, and finally the great American invention in 1833 of the balloon frame which is still the standard building method for houses in this country.

Wood provided a chemical source which most of us are unaware of. It provided the basis for dyes, for making soap with lye, for a whole range of naval stores which became important in American history, at least on the east coast, for potash and its various uses in agriculture, and in a surprising and somewhat ironic way was essential for iron smelting. And iron became the great competitor in the industrial revolution with wood and largely replaced wood in many applications. And yet, until the Civil War, wood was an essential part of the smelting of iron. It provided two things: in the form of charcoal it provided the source of fuel or heat for smelting, and because it was almost pure carbon it also provided the chemical necessary to reduce the ore. Wood then became essential in charcoal iron.

Mills were built of wood, grist mills for grinding grain, and other types of mills that we’re not so familiar with. The development of sawmills started with pit sawing by one man above a pit and the underdog in the pit sawing planks by hand. You can see this replicated at Plymouth Plantation and other outdoor museums. This was transformed into the sash saw, later into the circular buzz saw and finally into the large band saw, a transformation from primitive timber frames and mills into modern band saw mills capable literally of producing millions of board feet of timber.

Transportation is an important aspect of the use of wood. Bridges, wagons, and ships. Again in an ironic way we generally think of railways as part of the iron age, but in America railways were the product of the wooden age. Other than the locomotive itself, which I might add was lagged in wood, early railways including the rails were built of timber, all of the cars, the rolling stock, the bridges, and by and large the stations were all built of timber.

Household devices of all kinds, agricultural devices were all made of wood. What can we say about this? Well, I think the easiest thing to do would be to look to a visitor. David Stevenson, who was an uncle of Robert Louis Stevenson, visited the United States in 1838, and he had the following to say about the wooden age: “The zeal with which Americans undertake, and the rapidity with which they carry out every enterprise which
has the enlargement of their trade for its objective cannot fail to strike all who visit the United States as a characteristic of the nation. English and American engineers are guided by the same principles in designing their works, but the different nature of the materials employed in their construction and the climate and circumstances of the two countries naturally produce a considerable dissimilarity in the practice of engineers in England and America. At first view one is struck with the temporary and apparently unfinished state of many of the American works, and is very apt, before inquiry into the subject to impute to want of ability what turns out on investigation to be a judicious and ingenious arrangement to suit the circumstances of a new country, of which the climate is very severe, a country where stone is scarce and wood is plentiful and where manual labor is very expensive. It is vain to look to the American works with a finish which characterizes those of France or the stability for which those of Britain are famous.

This “can do” attitude of utilitarian engineering works is a characteristic of America, which I believe, has survived into our own day in many regards, and is certainly the hallmark then of the wooden age.

Benjamin Franklin declared “that man who invents new trades, parts or manufactures or new improvements in husbandry may properly be called the Fathers of their Nation.” Now if there was ever a tribute to the Industrial Revolution here it is from Franklin himself... It was then left for American craftsmen and later engineers to go on their own, without the protective device of an Academy of Science or a well-established bureaucracy such as the French had, and to carve out a new industrial nation on the basis of wood.

John Douglas
Novelist
Editor, Berkeley Springs
Morgan Messenger

I'm not a native West Virginian, [but]... I don't feel like an un-native West Virginian, because I was born in Cumberland, Maryland, which I don't see much difference between West Virginia and Cumberland, Maryland, western Maryland. My grandfather was born in Doe Gully, West Virginia, where I lived part of my adult life, too, and everybody on my street had names that I later encountered in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, so I figured they were all refugees from dirt roads and ended up working for the railroad in Cumberland. I know my family was. The ones that didn't come from West Virginia came from the Frostburg area or down around Westernport, coal miners from Wales largely. In my books I'm not overly concerned with history, but there's a background to everything, and I find myself at a little bit of a loss being too historic so I'm not going to try. ... When you think about your life, think about your connections, your family, you also can't help wondering where you came from.

I remember growing up in Cumberland in sort of a railroad neighborhood, on the long hill on the way up to the hospital, for those of you who've been there, and I looked at my mother one day and I said “Who are these people? Where'd we come from?” And she told me about my grandfather, and West Virginia. I met him when he was working in the South Cumberland shops, in my books they're the South Shawnee shops, and he always had this dream of retiring, and he was gonna build a cabin on the Potomac River in Doe Gully, W. Va. Never did it. I mean he wouldn't have left there if he'd intended to get back and do it.

She also said, these people are Scotch-Irish, now this is a term that if you ask a real Scotsman, Scotch-Irish, he doesn't like the word Scotch to start with, one, he'll say that's a whiskey, but the Scotch-Irish, as all of you historians know, were the people who came here usually from northern Ireland starting in the early 1700s. They weren't all Scotch, Scots, they weren't all Irish. Sometimes they were a mixture of the two, sometimes they were actually English, working class English who'd been sent up to Ireland to colonize northern Ireland and take it away from the Catholics by King James in the early 1600s.

Now some of these people didn't do too well in Ireland, so they bailed out and they came to America in great numbers in the early 1700s. And if you start looking at the settlement of the mountain area, you'll find a lot of Scottish names, a lot of working class British names, plus some Royalists who bailed out on Cromwell and came and went to Virginia about 1650 and then headed on west, and that's in my family, too, the Catletts. All these people were really trying to escape whatever the British government was, if they were Keltic, if they were Scottish, if they were Irish, they were trying to get away from England. If they were Royalists they were trying to get away from Cromwell's England, and later they, since they already started a rebellion against England, they just carried over 100 years later into the Revolution. So when they got to the mountains, they sort of found home. All these Keltic people, like the Scotch, first of all the terrain looked pretty good to them, and there wasn't much English rule, and even your first West Virginian, your first white West Virginian, Morgan Morgan, he was a Welshman, and there's Morgans in my family, too. But all these people were basically trying to get some sort of independence, as I see it. Now today we see that in this independent spirit in West Virginians. Today we see it in sort of a different view of the world than you might find in an urban area.

The city in my detective novels is called Shawnee... I chose the name Shawnee because I wanted a regional name. I didn't want to be thinking about Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia. I wanted something that was good everywhere in the whole Allegheny Mountain and mountain region. ... The Shawnees were never a big tribe. Despite all their wars and their combinations with the Delawares and various combinations to fight the colonists, the Shawnees were probably only a few thousand people ever, and they lived in tiny groups. They lived usually in villages of under 100.

One of my loonier thoughts when I'm sitting there trying to combine history with modern events and mystery novel plots... was walking around Shawnee a city of 40,000 people, litter towns out there filtering those people in for jobs, and I'm thinking, you know the Shawnees used to live in little towns where up in New York City we've got 11 million people, that's about right, isn't it? The Iroquois nation used to be very highly organized, and they used to have these long houses and they used to have these fortifications, and they used to have big towns, and I started wondering what's the connection here, what's the connection between the geography of where we live? Does the geography of where we live... mold us? Does the geography...
mean that we can’t have 11 million person cities and that at some point we’re going to ruin those hills if we do too much of that? And I started wondering, you know, are we sort of like the Shawnees? They got taken over by the Iroquois, and later they got pushed off their land. . . .

I do see a distinct culture that’s in this region, and in my mystery novels I try to find little ways of expressing it. I’d like to read you two or three small passages that show you what I mean, how you can sort of express that culture in a mystery novel. . . .

[From Shawnee Alley Fire, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987]

“Old Daniel . . . had seemed old as long as I could remember—so old I was surprised he was still breathing when I’d returned to the city. I imagine he’d only been in his late 50s when I was a kid playing ball in the alley, but to a kid, late 50s is ancient. Shortly after I’d come home to Shawnee, I’d spent an August afternoon sitting on his porch swing with him. Daniel, maybe 85, had watched the occasional car go by, momentarily breaking up the games of another generation of kids. That alley had spilled out one tale after another, some pretty salty. He was not at all the drab old man I once thought he was. Slowly I tried to convince him to let me take his picture. He had been reluctant at first because he didn’t understand why, but he finally gave in. I’d been happy with the portrait, with the way the lines were strip-mined into his face, while the eyes retained a coal-hard purity. He was a proud man in the way that old working-class Mountaineers could be. . . .”

[From Haunts, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990]

“When he was a boy there was a house he believed that was just as haunted in its own way as the Wilton place across the street was to kids today. This one had been just outside the city limits and three old people had lived in it, two aged men probably brothers from the look of them, both tall and creaky, and an equally old woman, short and plump as a Thanksgiving turkey. He could never decide which of the brothers the woman was married to, if indeed she was married to either. The house was a bare wood thing with that century-old seen-it-all air, and the three old people were just as weathered. The woman always had on one of those homemade dresses with little pink and white checks and an apron tied over it. The men wore overalls, no matter what the season. Sometimes in summer they’d be bare bony-chested, like maybe they weren’t wearing anything beneath the denim. Out in the mountains he’d seen old boys that went around like that, no underwear or anything. He guessed those guys were really a pair of old country boys, and the place was really a farm, or had been once upon a time, but even sixty years before, Shawnee was encroaching on them, city houses nibbled away at their hilly pasture. On Sunday afternoons his Uncle John would take Curry and his own kids for a ride out to the woods, and whenever they passed the place, one of the old trio was outside. Wood smoke always poured from the chimney, for heat in icebound January, for cooking in dog days July. What struck him—what he still remembered—was that the three never seemed to move. He never saw one of them flex a muscle. It was as if they were frozen in place on their porch, or rooted in the ground halfway to the woodpile, or standing on the path to the outhouse, like wax figures in a boardwalk museum. Even as a kid, he’d known those old people had to move. They were alive weren’t they? They weren’t wax figures. After all, when Uncle John’s Model T passed them again, the one he’d seen frozen on the path to the outhouse would now be locked in a new position on the way to the chicken coop or somewhere. He’d been a smart kid and he’d come to understand. Those old people were moving through another time and world, the city be damned. They were moving so slow that someone like him, tearing along in a Ford car, was simply traveling too fast to be able to spot their movement. Hell. When he was young. Now he was old, and his house was an old house, its cellar flooded too many times. The kids thought the people and places he’d known were haunted. Those kids, if they bothered to notice him at all, probably glanced over and wondered, “Doesn’t that son of a bitch ever move?” He was the one frozen on the path to the outhouse. Not always so. When he was young.
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Selected Accessions List

Genealogical records compiled by the donor and arranged alphabetically. The records give name, spouse’s name, children’s names, life date spans, marriage dates, and places of birth, marriage, death and burial. Also copies and typescripts of two church books of Henry D. Auville, Preacher in Charge of the Methodist Episcopal South Mission at Circleville, Pendleton Co. The books record attendance, membership status, officer status, and rites performed.

Papers and ledger of a Greenbrier County general store containing ledger entries for cloth, clothing, hardware and food items. The papers include inventories, receipts, contracts, correspondence and legal documents that pertain mostly to the indebtedness incurred by the company. Names mentioned are Hezekiah Belden, William Pettis, Edwin Porter, Samuel Price, Cyrus Walker, and Ezra Walker.

Weekly compilations of photocopied newsclippings prepared by the publicity department of Consolidation Coal Company. The clippings are taken from a wide variety of newspapers and document to a limited extent the coal industry nationally. Principally, however, the clippings focus on issues directly related to the company, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, and the United Mine Workers of America, relying mainly on Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia newspapers.

A monthly report and a subsistence account filed at the end of the War of 1812 for a Monongalia County militia unit stationed at Norfolk, Virginia. Mentioned are Capt. John Lantz, Lt. Col. Arch Woods and Lt. Peter Henkins. There are also certificates of medical exemption from the Civil War.


A volume of the articles of faith, meeting minutes, and a membership roll of a Ritchie County church belonging to the Harrisville Baptist Association and the Regular Baptist denomination. Mention is made of fund-raising for special needs, resolving of disputes between members, and the receiving and dismissal of members. Included is a membership roll that indicates baptism, death, restoration, exclusion and transferal of membership.


The land and legal papers of a Tucker and Randolph County family. Included are power of attorney documents between Jerome Harper of British Columbia and Ezekial Harper of Tucker County. There is also a note of a land survey done for Albert Gallatin. Other names mentioned are Jonathan W. Harper, David Goff, and Wyatt J. Ferguson.


A genealogy of the Hutchinson family and of the allied families of Sonnencraft, Mason and Majors. The Hutchisons were a prominent family of Fairfax County, Virginia, where the house of the family estate still stands, and is an excellent architectural example of a late eighteenth century plantation manor. Part of the family later settled in Marion County, West Virginia. Family members mentioned are Andrew Hutchinson, Jeremiah Hutchinson, John Hutchinson, and William Hutchinson.


Photographs, correspondence and documents of J.O. Knapp, a director of the West Virginia University Cooperative Extension Service. Knapp was a founder of the West Virginia 4-H Club, and he was recognized nationally and internationally for his work in rural education for both youth and adults. He was also instrumental in promoting programs for rural electrification in West Virginia.


Papers of William Lantz (b.1810), a Blacksville, West Virginia, farmer, constable, postmaster, and general store owner, and his descendants, particularly Remembrance Lantz. Included are family and business correspondence; bills, invoices, and ledger sheets relating principally to the Lantz family's general store; and militia documents and legal papers documenting William Lantz's activities as constable, justice of the peace, and commissioner of revenue for Blacksville.


Papers of J. Davitt McAteer, formerly a staff attorney for the United Mine Workers of America. The papers document McAteer's activities on behalf of Miners for Democracy in the UMWA's 1972 election, his involvement with West Virginians for a Fair and Equitable Assessment of Taxes (1976–82), and his service on the executive steering committee of the Appalachian Alliance (1977–81). Included are correspondence, legal materials, subject files, memos, and scattered meeting minutes.


Papers of E. Hansford McCourt, a West Virginia politician from Webster Springs. Included are correspondence, speeches, writings, clippings, scrapbooks, oral history tapes, photos, and two videotapes documenting McCourt's political career from his election to the state legislature in 1953, through his rise to president of the state senate in the 1960s, to his retirement from politics in 1973 following his unsuccessful run for Secretary of State on the Democratic ticket. Among the prominent correspondents represented in the papers are Cecil Underwood, Harley Staggers, Robert C. Byrd, and Arch A. Moore.

A list of Mason County medical practitioners alphabetically arranged, and including life span dates, parents' names, spouses' names, dates of practice, region of practice, and titles of books where more information can be found. Mention is made of early frontier doctors, James Craik and William Fleming. Craik was the doctor accompanying George Washington's surveying party to Pt. Pleasant, and Fleming was the attending physician to the wounded at the Battle of Pt. Pleasant.


The papers of a prominent Lewisburg, Greenbrier County, lawyer and politician, Samuel Price, who served numerous terms in the Virginia state legislature, and was Virginia's Lieutenant-Governor during the Civil War. He was also a delegate to the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1851, the Secession Convention of 1861, and the West Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1872; and he completed the U.S. Senate term of Allen Caperton in 1876. The papers include correspondence relating to local and state politics, Price's law practice, slavery, the Civil War, land speculation, and railroads. Also included are files and ledgers documenting Price's legal and political activities as well as personal financial records. Among the prominent correspondents are the Civil War generals John Echols and Jubal Early (1872) as well as the following: G.D. Camden, Allen T. Caperton, Charles J. Faulkner, William Parker Foulke, David Goff, Henry M. Mathews, and H.O. Middleton.


Records of the Scott's Run Settlement House located in Osage, West Virginia, and founded by the Women's Society for Christian Service of the Wesley Methodist Church of Morgantown. The settlement house provided a wide range of social services for the inhabitants of the coal mining communities along Scott's Run in Monongalia County. Included in the records are board minutes, staff and statistical reports, director's correspondence, subject files, financial records, scrapbooks and clippings which document the activities of the neighborhood center as well as the character and problems of the area.

This powder horn belonged to Daniel Boone, who resided in Kanawha County during the late 1780s and 1790s. Loaned by Llewellyn and Marsha Cole.