Happy 127th Birthday, West Virginia!

West Virginia Day 1990

What do birthday cakes, West Virginia history and torrential rains have in common? WVU's annual West Virginia Day Celebration, of course!

As readers who failed to attend the June 20th event have no doubt deduced, the fourth annual West Virginia Day Celebration was a wet one — as usual. But, once again, the weather did little to dampen either attendance or enthusiasm at the event which was dedicated this year to examining the history of women and education in West Virginia, in recognition of the WVU Women's Centenary.

The proceedings began at 9:00 AM in the Regional History Collection's Byrd Reading Room with a forum entitled "Excellence Through Equity: Women and Education in West Virginia." Moderated by Visiting Committee chairman, John E. Stealey III, five speakers addressed the changing experiences and concerns of five generations of West Virginia women, ranging from the pre-statehood period to the present.

WVU history professor Barbara J. Howe led the way with a discussion of the limited educational opportunities that were available to women during the pre- and early statehood eras. Dr. Howe noted that while educating women was deemed necessary in order to prepare them for the responsibilities of motherhood, only the wealthy could afford to send their daughters to the private seminaries which flourished throughout the region during the 19th century.

The generation of Harriet Lyon, who became WVU's first woman graduate in 1891, was represented by WVU Center for Women's Studies director, Judith G. Stitzel. Dr. Stitzel challenged her audience to compare the obstacles faced by the University's first women with those confronting Natalie Tennant, WVU's first female Mountaineer mascot, today.

Susan Maxwell, a member of the WVU Libraries' Visiting Committee and Instructor of English at Fairmont State College, drew similar parallels between the past and present in representing the women of the early twentieth century. Stressing the overwhelming importance of instilling a love of learning and the arts within the home, she expressed serious concern about the deterioration of the home environment and the continuing dilemma faced by women in juggling family and career responsibilities.

After a brief intermission, Victorine Louistall Monroe, WVU Emeritus Associate Professor of Library Science, delivered a presentation which she noted might well be titled "From Integration to Segregation and Back to Integration." Chiefly autobiographical in nature, Ms. Monroe detailed her experiences as WVU's first black graduate and faculty member.
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The forum was brought to a rousing conclusion with remarks by Natalie Tennant whose selection as the first female Mountaineer mascot in the Spring of 1990 has sparked a minor controversy on campus. Ms. Tennant acknowledged the existence of women mountaineers in the hills of West Virginia for centuries, and pointed out that her critics would be sorely disappointed if she were to go "back to the kitchen" on their behalf as she is a better trapper than cook!

The resources of the WVU Women's Centenary Project were joined with those of the Regional History Collection in producing this year's theme exhibit, "No Turning Back: Women and Education in West Virginia." Opening with a crowd of poster seekers at 11:00 am, the exhibit was located in the Mountainlair's new Grandview Gallery. Included in what was certainly the most ambitious West Virginia Day exhibition to date, was an array of documents and photographs, and artifacts ranging from Sallie Norris's (Class of 1893) ball gown to a jersey worn by WVU basketball great Georgeann Wells who in 1984 became the first woman in history to dunk a basketball in a collegiate game.

Following a full afternoon of picnicking, live entertainment and children's activities, West Virginia Day 1990 concluded with a performance by the Miltenberger Jazz Quartet.

A Farewell to Curator George Parkinson

It was with heavy hearts that the staff of the Regional History Collection bid farewell to curator George Parkinson on April 27, 1990. In search of new horizons after 18 years at the helm of the Regional History Collection, Parkinson accepted a position as head of the Ohio Historical Society's Archives Library Division in March.

As Ohio's state archivist, Dr. Parkinson will oversee the historical society's 200,000-volume library and 4,000 historical collections.

A native of Ohio and a graduate of Ohio State University, Parkinson holds a masters degree and doctorate in American history from the University of Wisconsin. He joined the West Virginia Collection back in 1972 when the Collection was housed in the University's main library. An ambitious acquisitions program and Parkinson's concern with proper environment led to the Collection's relocation into newly renovated Colson Hall in 1980.

Parkinson lists among his other accomplishments increasing the Collection's holdings in Civil War and political history material and strengthening collections relevant to the history of women, and racial and ethnic groups.

Major acquisitions which he oversaw include the Sen. Robert C. Byrd Papers, the United Mine Workers Health and Retirement Fund Archives, the Louis Watson Chappell folklore archives and the personal papers and artworks of artist, author and statesman David Hunter Strother.

As interim library development director, Parkinson also played an important role in increasing the visibility of the WVU Libraries within the University, state and region and in establishing a program of financial development.

In the words of Dean of Libraries Ruth Jackson, "Dr. Parkinson has made major contributions to the development of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection and to library fund raising activities. We are very sorry to lose him, but we wish him well as he embarks upon a new and exciting phase in his career."
Women had to be educated because they needed to be good mothers to their sons. . . . The concept was called Republican Motherhood. The Republic could not survive and flourish if the sons weren't well-educated. . . . Women are responsible for passing on the culture and the values of the society — particularly in the 19th century when the men were off being corrupted by the business world. Somebody had to stay home and protect the family, and that was the woman's job. Well, if you kept her at home totally, then she didn't know anything, and then she couldn't educate her sons, so you had to let her out, you know, to get her educated, but then bring her back into the safety of the home so she could pass it on in sort of an unpolluted environment to her son, and then he went out and got corrupted and married a pure wife who passed it on, and that's the way it went . . .

How did women in West Virginia get their education? There was no public school system as we know it today. There were only private schools throughout most of the colonial period and through most of the 19th century. In 1810 there was a literary fund set up by the state of Virginia which was to educate the very poorest of the children between the ages of about 7 and 15. If you were very poor you could go to a literary fund school. If you were rich enough to afford a private school you went to that. If you were in the middle, as most of us probably would have been, you went nowhere . . . . And one of the things that became very upsetting to the people in western Virginia was that education was suffering at the hands of the legislature in Richmond. . . .

In 1841 the Clarksburg Convention took place just down the road from us. Primarily interested in supporting religious education . . . they did suggest that women ought to be educated . . . "The moral force of the female character has the strongest influence on the mind of man, and nature, as if to compensate woman for her weakness, has conferred upon her this stong moral force. Generally the best lessons of life fall upon man's heart from the lips of his mother." So, the people in western Virginia said we've got to educate our mothers, or our future mothers, if they are going to educate their sons.

In 1846 the Legislature in Richmond passed the twin
acts establishing a state-wide system of free public schools by county district [but] only three counties [Jefferson, Kanawha and Ohio] had a public school system set up under this system. These were open both to boys and girls, however, if you lived in those counties and were able to take advantage of them.

Much of the education that took place then took place in the form of private seminaries . . . that were founded at various times ([and] didn't always admit women when they began but eventually came to admit women) . . . in Shepherdstown, Clarksburg, Charles Town, Wellsburg, West Union, Lewistown — Lewistown was a very important center for women's education — Romney, Wheeling, Morgantown . . . all over the state there were opportunities for women to get an education in these seminaries if you could afford it. These were private endeavors . . . . Sometimes these were church-related schools. It's very important to note that the church — particularly the Presbyterian church and the Methodist church — was very interested in supporting education throughout the state and supporting education for women. And Sunday schools were one way of getting an education if you couldn't get into the other schools, but also they supported these private academies.

The Wheeling Female Seminary . . . was bought by a nucleus of people that converted it into the Wheeling Female College right after the Civil War, and Wheeling Female College moves us into a slightly higher level of institution. The outline of study there in 1866 was laid down based "not so much on what is deemed a good course of study in a male college as what seems adapted to the wants of young ladies . . . . It's difficult to assign any satisfactory or intelligent reason why young ladies should follow the course of intellectual training laid out for young men." However, having said that, they then went on to explain that they were very interested in exercise for young ladies, which was an area of concern. There was a place where you could do your light gymnastics if you were a student there in the late 1860s. They had philosophical and chemical apparatus for you for illustrating the sciences, models and patterns for drawing and painting. The fine arts come into these women's schools in a heavy way, and instruments for instruction in music. "It all pertains in thorough intellectual culture in accomplishment of thought and self-reliance to pure sentiment and noble feeling. It is intended that the institution shall be worthy of the highest public confidence and support from their students, for the work that they did with their students."

After the Civil War we begin to see the development of what appears to us now as a more familiar system of collegiate education. Across the country the "Seven Sisters" women's schools were beginning to be formed and organized. Immediately after the Civil War, West Virginia sets up its state-wide public school system in the process of creating the state, then in 1867 it begins to set up the Normal school system, building on West Liberty which already existed, [and] Marshall which already existed. These were all co-educational academies to begin with, and Marshall was the first of the Normal, the chief Normal school, and the others were technically branches, then spin off on their own. The Normal schools then get set up eventually at Shepherdstown, at Concord, at West Liberty, Fairmont, Glenville, Marshall . . . . These are still white-only Normal schools.

For blacks there is a public education system set up after statehood, but only if you've got . . . 30 children that would be eligible in your area, then the county is obligated to set up a school system. If there aren't 30 people in an area then they're not obligated, and . . . . this meant that there were no opportunities. Eventually that number comes down, and blacks are provided with their own school system, but a separate school system of course. Storer College becomes the Normal School for blacks and the only real opportunity beyond the public schools until the 1890s when Bluefield is set up and West Virginia State.

Bethany is set up as the first chartered college in the state and it does not originally admit women, but it does admit women about 1877, and in a way is very parallel to WVU. There had been a parallel, a women's seminary run by, I think it's a sister of Alexander Campbell or somebody, who was running a seminary in Pennsylvania. (Alexander Campbell was running Bethany.) When that seminary burns, then they say "Well, let's not rebuild the other seminary, let's just combine the two", and so women get integrated into Bethany about 1877.

The Methodists were also very important in integrating higher education. In the Barboursville Seminary, which they set up in 1888 which then becomes part of Morris Harvey, which is now the University of Charleston, that was integrated from the very beginning. West Virginia Wesleyan is set up just about the same time. It opens after
WVU and admits women but it's planned beforehand to be co-educational when it's established. As far as I can tell, Salem College, which opens in 1889, is also co-educational from the beginning. So, many of the schools in the state were co-educational... before WVU began to admit women...

Judith G. Stitzel
Director, WVU Center for Women's Studies

I was given a formidable task for this morning, to represent the generation of Harriet Lyon, the generation of the first women to enter WVU, the generation of the groundbreakers... I will be doing so in a somewhat unconventional way... I would like to represent the women of the past by sharing with you some of my analyses of the present... I'd like you to imagine what it might have been like to be Harriet in 1889 by looking with me at some of what's been happening to Natalie in 1990...

As soon as Natalie was chosen I started to follow the articles and the letters to the editor about her with great attention, almost compulsively, filling folder after folder with multiple copies in case one would get lost and I wouldn't be able to find it, seeing these letters and commentaries as history in the making, and recognizing that, in Natalie's situation, we might find some interesting differences from, and similarities to, Harriet's...

I'd like to... recount for the record two verbal exchanges I've had about Natalie's selection, because I think they, too, shed light not only on how we may read Natalie's story, but on how we may interpret her foremothers' struggle 100 years ago, and the restrictions that still interfere with women's full participation in society and culture. In the first case, the exchange is with a feminist student—a male student—who's a member of the Women's Centenary Student Advisory Board. "Can I ask you something?" he inquired earnestly one morning in the office when we were reading a letter criticizing Mountain's choice. "What if the man was really a better Mountaineer than Natalie was? You wouldn't have wanted her just because she was a woman, would you?" I knew this man well, and knew from other things he had said and written that he had no prejudices that would preclude a woman being chosen, that he was, in fact, very pleased that Natalie had been selected and delighted with the idea of one more barrier broken. And yet he seemed unsure of himself. There was apprehension in his voice. He hadn't been at the game, and he was afraid that perhaps I, and other women, might have been willing to lower our standards, to judge men and women by different standards, to compromise some mythical objective standards—and all of these, of course are versions of the same fear—that we might have done that just so a woman could win. It's one thing, he seemed to be saying, to have a woman enter a man's domain, quite another to have her do it on her own terms. I thought of Harriet Lyon, and about how proud all of us are that she graduated first in her class. What if she hadn't? What lack of confidence in ourselves were we betraying by our deep need for her exceptionality? What if the man was really better than the woman? According to what standards? Whether we are aware of it or not, for most of us the word "Mountaineer" has not been neutral; it has, in contradiction to the historical facts, been gendered. For that reason, for many people, the man who competed with Natalie, in fact, any man, simply by virtue of being a man, would better fulfill their expectations as to what the Mountaineer should be, of how one should be a Mountaineer. Unless she would have been willing and/or able—for which I for one am glad she was not—to be an imitation man, Natalie could never have been as good as the man. Nor should she have been. She should have been as good as she could be. It was not any case, hasn't "Just because he was a man"

"Just because he was a man" certainly seemed to be what was behind the response of the second person I want to talk about, a man, perhaps in his 60s or 70s, who came up to me after I gave a speech about the Centenary to the Morgantown Rotary, an organization which itself is recently and proudly beginning to include women. He was cautious and polite. He hadn't wanted to raise the issue during the formal question and answer period. He agreed with everything I was saying about the need to increase women's access to various educational career opportunities, but what, he asked, lowering his voice, did I think about the woman Mountaineer? He hardly let me get my enthusiastic response out before he was telling me that this was one change that he just couldn't accept. He was very polite, in fact, what he said was almost in the nature of a plea. "Why did she need to do that?" he wanted to know. Why did she need to break that tradition which had meant so much to him, and others? "I can't help it," he said. "I feel as if something very important has been taken away from me. The Mountaineer stands for loyalty, he stands for West Virginia. I identify with him." I was surprised at how much I found myself moved by his sense of loss, and I suggested that perhaps the very power of his feelings might allow him to understand how I and other women might feel, how deeply
strengthened and supported we might feel when regional pride and heroism were embodied in a woman. I don't think he heard me, or if he did he didn't seem convinced, and I don't know whether he's thought about our conversation any further. But I have. I've thought how much easier it is for me to deal with the emotional honesty of loss than with the arrogant pretense of neutrality sometimes found in the letters. For this man, he was being asked to give up something; he was being asked to give up his exclusive rights to the image of regional heroism and pride. He was experiencing something new — the significant challenge to his automatic sense of entitlement, to his previously unquestioned androcentric privilege, and he was person enough to acknowledge it. For him, heroism and pride were male. He knew he could not see himself in a woman, and either assumed that woman should be able to see herself in a man, or that it didn't matter. But it does matter. The first man I mentioned, he wanted to make sure that we wouldn't have chosen Natalie just because she was a woman; the second man could not accept the choice of Natalie, just because she was a woman. The pain of his response suggests why the resistance, when it does exist, is as strong as it is. For however they see themselves, however they wish to be seen, the Harriets and the Natalies and the other first women challenge some very basic assumptions about the nature of the world. As is surely clear with the Mountaineer, they challenge the sacred as well as the profane order, their very presence is an implied demand that all of us reject the tainted privileges of exclusivity. Fortunately, now as then, there seem to be those who understand that in rejection there is much gain, that by standing tall on the mountain of equity we can together gaze on the heavens of excellence. But it does not do to forget that there is a struggle going on — an intellectual and emotional struggle — and to the Harriets and the Natalies, and may I say to the Betty Boyds, we owe not only admiration, but gratitude. For in their stories, if we learn how to read them, is the alphabet of a more expansive reality for all of us.

Not until the 19th century were women allowed into the hallowed halls of academe. This did not mean, however, that women were not educated before then. Education implies the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and it is not always the result of formal education. I believe real education rests upon proper nurturing in the early years, experiencing the thrill, the joy of learning, and having access to books and the arts . . . . The affluence of the family often mattered in the past, and also, I fear, now . . . . An anthology of 18th century verse provides evidence of a rise in literacy among women in England. These women were, of course, self-educated, and most of them had fathers with large libraries. They were educated at home, mostly by themselves. When they discovered the joy of learning, developed a desire for an education, they managed to find a way to acquire it.

In 1926 Monticola lists 191 men in the graduating class and 26 women — a ratio of almost 8 to 1. When I entered the freshman class at WVU in 1941, I was told the ratio of men to women was still 8 to 1. A very nice balance for us women. Looking at the pictures of those 26 women, I pondered what they may have done with their lives. How many had careers? Or how many were like the women referred to by the president of Bryn Mawr when she said "Our failures only marry"? I suspect that most of them were failures, in that sense, and those who had careers did not marry. Among them were several women whom I knew. Only one had a child — one child.

I remember the women instructors I had in college — Helen Purinton Pettigrew, Elizabeth Frost Reed, Rebecca Pollock, Marja Steadman Fear. Interesting, isn't it, that the married women used all three names. All four were distinguished teachers, but I don't think any of them became professors. Perhaps Rebecca Pollock did, but she was a spinster. I also remember that she said that if we wanted to become teachers we should realize that half our salaries would always be the joy of a job well done.
It was not easy then to juggle marriage and career. Most women had to make the choice, unless for some reason, usually widowhood, made them have to earn their daily bread. David Dale Johnson, who was head of the English Department when I was in college, used to ponder in his class on the novel, why women did not excell in the arts except as novelists. He finally concluded that novel writing was a career that could be combined with marriage. He did not ponder the fact that most women novelists were not married, fewer had children, and most depended upon husbands or fathers for their daily bread.

I very much suspect those 26 women in the class of 1926 would not have been there if they hadn't come from homes where they had experienced the joy of learning, as well as from homes affluent enough to pay the bills. And I suspect times haven't changed very much. If the journals of my women students — those who have just graduated from high school — are representative of women today, then they are mainly concerned with finding a mate, and, except for a very few, and not becoming educated. They do not have the background or the will to learn . . . Three generations later, what have women accomplished? Has formal education improved a woman's lot? Now there are women CEO's, lawyers, doctors, architects, stockbrokers — professions that women used not to aspire to. The bright women, who used to become teachers, are now using their education and freedom to make money. More and more women are becoming musicians, painters, and poets. The ones who have elected the arts are struggling, as men have, to make a living in their vocations. For these women the decision is the same as that of their grandmothers and mothers — family or career . . .

Not long ago I watched a McNeill-Lehrer broadcast debating the issue of a lady law professor who was being sought at Harvard. One of the debaters said the real problem was they couldn't find qualified people. Enrollment in the graduate schools has dropped. The colleges are not providing competent graduate school students because the high schools are not providing competent college students. The elementary schools are not providing competent high school students. Shall we then conclude the homes are not providing the basic nurturing that provides the basis for learning? Could this be the result of the trend where the best and the brightest women opt for the money-making jobs?

And who is teaching the teachers? And who is caring for the children of working women? Maybe the "right to lifers" would do better to expend their energies demanding better child care and health care for the children who have been born. What will life be like for the women who might be great-grandchildren of those 26 women in the class of '26? Although sadly there won't be many — if any. I hope they will not have to choose between having a family and having a career, as the best educated women do now . . . I believe education rests mainly upon a love of learning, of access to books, and exposure to the arts. No one can assess the loss to the western world when the library at Alexandria was destroyed. Had that not happened, the Dark Ages might not have been so dark.

Harvard University began when John Harvard donated a considerable library to found that institution. George Mason, author of the Bill of Rights, was a self-educated man. He had a splendid library. I hope the great-grandchildren of the Class of 1926 and many of the boys and girls their age, would be like the child in this poem by Robert Pinsky entitled, "Library Scene".

Under the ceiling of metal stamped like plaster
And below the ceiling fan in the brown lustre
Someone is reading, in the sleepy room
Alert, her damp cheek balanced on one palm,
With knuckles loosely holding back the pages
Or fingers waiting lightly at their edges.
Her eyes are like the eyes of someone attending
To a fragile work, familiar and demanding —
Some work of delicate surfaces or threads
Someone is reading the way a rare child reads,
A kind of changeling reading for love of reading,
For love and for the course of something leading
Her child's intelligent soul through its inflection:
A force, a kind of loving work or action.
Someone is reading in a deepening room
Where something happens, something that will come
To happen again, happening as many times
As she is reading in as many rooms.
What happens outside that calm/like water braiding
Over green stones? The ones of little reading
Or who never read for Jove, are many places.
They are in the house of power, and many houses
Reading as they do, doing what they do.
Or it happens that they come, at times, to you
Because you are somehow someone that they need:
They come to you and you tell them how you read.

I hope, too, that it would be as easy to raise money for libraries as for football stadiums. And I hope, too, in that age poets like Robert Pinsky — and all artists — will be able to earn a living practicing their art. In a civilized and educated community that would be so.
I suppose my subject could very well be “From Integration, To Segregation, and Back To Integration.” Two very divergent themes have been running through American history. First, that America’s doors were open to all, and secondly, that after arrival, all immigrants were expected to willingly take their place within the melting pot. In recent years the melting pot theory has been challenged by a wide variety of groups . . . . The most active groups demanding change in American attitudes are the blacks, the Chicanos, the Indians, Puerto Ricans, Asian-Americans, and women. These are all asking for an acknowledgement of their heritages, and an acceptance of them as individuals. In our democracy it should be possible to secure a multi-cultural education as we live together, go to school together, work together, worship together, without the artificial barriers, and without regard to superficial differences in physical appearances or ethnic origins. We are still striving for the difficult goal of democracy, cultural polarisms without loss of unity. Therefore we are obliged consciously to seek contacts between groups and planned activities which will bring better inter-group understanding, appreciation, and acceptances, such as this program here today.

My talk will be mostly autobiographical. I will tell you I came to Clarksburg with my mother in 1922. I had attended school from kindergarten to the 5th grade in the integrated schools of Pennsylvania — Pittsburgh, to be exact. Then we moved to Clarksburg, and in Clarksburg we lived in an integrated neighborhood. And in spite of the fact that we attended separate schools, the adults and children enjoyed a pleasant relationship. However, the one world in schools was emphasized by ‘the race spirit’ by our principal and teachers at Kelly Miller School. Our class work was infused with the creative work of Negro writers, making us aware of the historic roles Negroes had played in America. I was fortunate also in having parents who were college educated, former teachers, and had education as a top priority in life. I happened to grow up in Virginia State, and he left there and went to Howard University. And in 1915, he published a journal of Negro history which emphasized the role of blacks in America — in American culture, American history, and the development of America. We were taught that being black is a proud heritage. Woodson also started the Negro History Week in 1926, and when I was in high school, my history teacher, D. H. Kyle, prepared us for this celebration. We gave orations, wrote papers about the Negro inventors, soldiers, the abolitionists, gave characterizations of famous blacks. And in particular, I remember I had to do a speech on Sojourner Truth, who gave this very important speech back in the early 1800s for a woman’s meeting in Toledo, Ohio — that famous “I Am A Woman” speech. Because she was so dynamic, and many people thought that a woman could not be such a great orator, . . . they had asked her to prove the fact that she was a woman. So she bared her breasts . . . ., and she said “I am a woman.” That allayed their fears . . . .

After graduation from West Virginia State College with a degree in business administration . . . I made the decision to begin work on an M.A. Now many of you may not know that the state of West Virginia paid the out-of-state tuition for black teachers to get their graduate degrees, and at that time, in the early 40s there were quite a few. They attended schools in New York City, they attended Columbia, they went to New York University, Pitt, some of them journeyed out west, and the fact that many of the black teachers were getting degrees from the eastern and western colleges, and at that particular time West Virginia U was not accredited by the North Central, so as a result, they passed a law, it was sort of secretly passed, I guess, because it wasn’t well-known that black teachers could attend West Virginia University. So in 1940, 1941, I enrolled at Clarksburg, in the extension course. It was held at Central Junior High School, and my advisor, who happened to be Dr. Rebecca Pollock that Judith mentioned, she was my advisor and mentor at that particular time. So after I had about 15 hours she said . . . I told her I was going to Pitt, I had been accepted at Pitt, and she said, “Well, why don’t you come to WVU?” So I came to the campus the summer of 1942.

As you know I couldn’t stay on the campus or eat in the cafeteria, which was located just about where the current Mountainlair is now, and blacks were denied service in the local restaurants. I roomed and boarded with Mrs. Nora Marshall and her family on White Avenue. Mrs. Marshall would prepare a brown bag lunch for me and sometimes I would stay on the campus, and at that time the Agricultural Department had, they sold ice cream at Oglebay Hall. Many of you might remember that that was where they disposed of the excess milk. Anyway, many times my advisor would ask me to come to her house for lunch. She had a young niece who was about my age, and maybe twice a week we would have lunch together. I suppose I wasn’t aware of any visible signs of racism. In fact, the word was not commonly used in the early 1940s. My professors were fair, cordial, and I became close friends with many classmates and professors. And many of these friendships have continued through the years. After completing my oral exam on my thesis, which was a comparison of the opportunities offered the Negro and White Schools in the Field of Commerce in West Virginia, it seemed like I waited for hours before the committee reconvened. Finally, Dr. Hill, who was on my committee, and Dr. Pollock came out. And they congratulated me, and then Dr. Hill said to me “How does it feel to be the first Negro woman to graduate from
Balloons, face painting, puppets and more, made this year's West Virginia Day celebration a special one for little mountaineers.

WVU?” At that point I was taken aback, because I really didn’t realize that I had become a pioneer . . . .

I returned to WVU in the summer of 1950 to become certified in library science. Our school, Kelly Miller, was up for review by the North Central Association, and since I was single and free to go, my principal asked me to come to WVU so our school could be certified and accredited. And I completed my second M.A. degree from WVU in library science . . . In 1966 Dr. Robert Munn offered me the position in the library science department as assistant professor . . . .

Now when I was getting ready to retire there were a lot of press releases in the fact that I had pioneered both as a graduate and also as a member of the faculty, and as was mentioned, when I started teaching you couldn’t teach if you were married, and so I had to wait until I retired in order to get married. I would say that I guess over a thousand students and practically all of the school librarians in the state have been students of mine. It was a very fulfilling and enjoyable experience.

Natalie Tennant

Broadcast Journalism
Senior and 1990/91
WVU Mountaineer

“Go back to the kitchen! Go back to the kitchen!” and “Go make babies!” These words were somewhat of a surprise to me back in February when I was trying out to be the West Virginia University Mountaineer. And at the time, these words, they didn’t strike any really deep emotions in me, cause actually I thought they were kind of funny that people could come up with such a chant, because I didn’t think it was that big of a deal — my trying out to be the Mountaineer. I’d always been a Mountaineer and I was a mascot in high school, so I thought I had the qualifications and experience to do the
job, and I didn’t think I had to break any barriers . . . .

Now that I look back on that game I do wish that I would have thought a little bit faster while I was at the game and they were yelling “Go back to the kitchen.” I would have said, “I don’t know how to cook!”

. . . I was raised on a farm and I live on a farm, and I think that’s kind of what makes me feel that I’m one of the true Mountaineers, and as I’ve said, I’ve probably hunted and trapped more than any of my critics . . . .

Anyone who’s heard me talk about being the Mountaineer knows that I talk a lot about my family, and I have five brothers and one sister. Sometimes she doesn’t get mentioned, but she’s the one that kind of led the force . . . .

My sister was the first female student body president at her high school . . . . I became the student body president in my high school, because I had seen what she had done and I liked what she was doing . . . .

. . . I think that I’m kind of worried or scared that if I stop and take a look and see what I’m doing that I might get stuck in the middle, and I might get stuck not moving ahead, and I want to keep a step ahead, so I think when next March comes, which is the end of my reign of being Mountaineer, I’ll stop and take a look and see what I’ve done, and think, “Oh, my goodness, what did I do?” . . . .

I was proud of myself that during the basketball game I kept going throughout the boos and derogatory remarks, that I kept going, and I often wonder if, even as I probably will get more of those throughout this year, I wonder what I’ll be like in 20 years, will I be this hard-core woman who “I can do anything”; it kind of, after some of the effort, I’ve hardened myself and readied myself for the letters of protests I felt kind of like a rebel that I could do anything, and you know, if you didn’t like my way, well, that was too bad. So I do feel kind of like a rebel sometimes and hopefully I’m keeping that in moderation.

. . . In talking about our theme today, “Women and Education,” I don’t know if in the past three months I’ve given more education or gotten more education about being the Mountaineer. In travelling the state of West Virginia, in being the Mountaineer, I’ve seen and learned what it’s really like to be a symbol of West Virginia, from meeting male alumni whom I, before they meet me aren’t so sure they like the idea of a female Mountaineer, but once they get to talk to me they see that I’m genuinely sincere about my position, and they see that I can indeed shoot the gun and with one hand if I must say so myself, like you see most of them. And I’m thankful to them that they’ve shown me their passion and I’ve stirred some of their emotions, and I’m thankful that they’ve shown me compassion about being the Mountaineer, and their spirit toward their school and their heritage.

You know one thing that I really enjoy is visiting the elementary schools, the many questions that I’m asked there are “Are you really the first female Mountaineer?” And I have to clarify that a little bit and I say, “Yes, I’m the first female Mountaineer mascot at West Virginia University. But I’m not the first female Mountaineer.” I say that our grandmothers and our great-grandmothers were Mountaineers way before I was. So I give a little bit of education to the students, and they realize that, and since I’m from a farm and many of the elementary schools that I go to are back in my area, they can understand that also.

. . . After I got it for Mountaineer, several people came up to me and talked to me, and one woman came up to me and said that she was a student here at the University in the 1950s and she was in the School of Engineering where she was the only woman, and also at that time they did not allow women to be in the band, and she wanted desperately to be in the band because in high school she’d been all-state band and she enjoyed being in the band, and I think, as she said, from not getting to be in the band and being the only woman in the School of Engineering, that she did indeed drop out because she was ill from ulcers, and sometimes I think that I’m continuing what she couldn’t continue.

Also at the Gold-Blue game, I met this little girl who was probably 8 or 9 years old, and her parents told me that last fall she was at one of the football games and she had seen the Mountaineer and she said that she wanted to be the first female Mountaineer . . . .

The education that I have continues from what I have learned about Harriet Lyon through my readings and I do become humbled when I’m compared to her . . . . Her education continues through the stories that I hear of these older women and to the young girl who still holds my dreams in her hands. And when this little girl was announcing to her family that she wanted to be a female Mountaineer, the first female Mountaineer, her brother, who was probably 13 or 14 or a little bit older; and you know at that age, he said, “Oh, no dumb girl is ever going to be the Mountaineer!” And you know, he was probably right, more right than any of us thought, because no dumb girl is the Mountaineer!
In May, Dean of Libraries Ruth Jackson announced the appointment of John A. Cuthbert as interim curator of the Regional History Collection.

Dr. Cuthbert, who holds a bachelor's degree from Worcester State College, master's degrees from the University of Massachusetts and WVU and a Ph.D. in Musicology from WVU, has been associate curator of the Regional History Collection since 1985.

"As the primary historical repository within the central Appalachian Region, the West Virginia Collection serves a broad audience. I particularly look forward to renewing collecting efforts and to expanding the scope of the collections to more broadly represent regional culture," Cuthbert said.

"Dr. Cuthbert," noted Dean of Libraries Ruth Jackson, "was a logical choice for the interim appointment. He has established a record of scholarship in the areas of regional art and music history, and has been heavily involved in all aspects of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection. The Collection, like the other parts of the WVU Libraries, will face many challenges and initiatives in the year ahead and I anticipate that he will continue to make contributions in enhancing its reputation."

Selected Accessions List


The muster roll dating from December 30, 1862 — February 28, 1863 of Capt. Jasper A. Smith and Lt. Joseph Ankrom of Company G, Second Virginia Volunteer Cavalry, later the Second West Virginia Cavalry, including a record of payment to members of the company and explanations for back pay or any other discrepancies. Included are remarks about company discipline and condition of munitions and personal effects such as uniforms. Also, a letter, dated October 14, 1861, from Capt. Robert Coles of the Virginia 40th Infantry, Wise Legion, stationed at Camp Defiance, Sewell Mountain, to Col. Lucius Davis, requesting certification to purchase necessary equipment.


The printed and bound legal briefs and law reports of the Clarksburg firm of Davis & Davis. The firm was composed of father, John J. Davis, and son, John W. Davis. Both men were prominent in politics. The elder was a member of the second statehood convention and a U. S. Congressman during Reconstruction. The younger became ambassador to Great Britain during World War I and the 1924 Democratic presidential nominee. These volumes, which are numbered and labelled with the name of the legal firm, contain a table of contents of cases included. There are also penciled notes and in one case the signature of John W. Davis. The volumes continue until the firm was dissolved when John W. Davis was appointed U. S. Solicitor General.


The 1980 microfilm edition of the collected interviews, correspondence, notes, and reports of a Wisconsin based, New York born antiquarian and early researcher of frontier history. Lyman C. Draper's manuscripts were willed to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin where he had served as corresponding secretary, and was instrumental in its development. Draper had originally planned to publish, on the basis of these manuscripts, a series of books on frontier history and biographies of famous pioneers. Only one was published, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes*. In addition to materials for biographies of frontier notables such as Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, Lewis Wetzel, Simon Kenton, and Sam Brady, Draper collected many documents and interviews concerning Native Americans (he had planned to write biographies of chiefs Tecumseh and Joseph Brant), Afro-Americans and women and their life on the frontier.

Because of the significance of the Draper papers for studying the early American frontier and its pioneers, the collection was microfilmed and made available to libraries and scholars in 1949. A second edition, offering improvements in quality and organization, was issued in 1980 along with a printed guide to the collection.

The Draper Collection is organized regionally with holdings encompassing an area bordered by the western parts of Virginia and the Carolinas and portions of Georgia and Alabama, encompassing the entire Ohio River Valley, and parts of the Mississippi Valley from the era of frontier conflicts in the 1740s and 1750s to the American Revolution and the War of 1812.


An oil on canvas portrait of West Virginia's 17th governor, painted in 1930 by Z. E. Talbert.


Furlough and discharge documents of Civil War soldier and Morgantown native, Pvt. Charles B. Shisler, of the 6th West Virginia Cavalry, Co. A. The documents contain
Howard M. Gore (left) left a presidential cabinet position to become West Virginia's 17th governor in 1925.

A 1900 graduate of WVU, Gore became nationally known for his methods of breeding and raising beef cattle on his Harrison County farm. His notoriety attracted the attention of President Calvin Coolidge who appointed him to the position of Secretary of Agriculture in 1924. Gore vacated the post after just five months to serve as West Virginia's chief executive from 1925-1929. His administration is remembered primarily today for its contribution to state roadways and for a dramatic appeal by the Governor to legislators for relief funds to assist families living in the state's poverty stricken coal fields.

Painted by Z. E. Talben in 1930, this portrait hung for many years in Clarksburg's Gore Hotel. It was recently donated to the Regional History Collection by Gov. Gore's nephew, Truman Gore of Clarksburg.


Papers, photos, pamphlets, and postcards of a prominent Morgantown attorney, financier and businessman, James Rogers Moreland. Included are drafts of books and articles by James R. Moreland about local and family history, in particular “Early Iron Industry in Cheat Mountains” and “My Father, Another Country Lawyer”. There are family histories and records concerning the Finnicum, Hawthorne, Huston, Lewis, Lyle, Moreland and Rogers families. Also included are numerous World War I items relating to Morgantown such as information concerning the Morgantown Militia Reserve and the Military Training Camps Association, as well as the records and a history of the Bank of Monongahela Valley, and papers of the Mercersburg Academy, the Rotary, Sons of the Revolution, and the West Virginia University Kappa Alpha fraternity.

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