

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 2, Fall 2013

# DETAILS

*A Newsletter from the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office  
West Virginia Division of Culture and History*



Wyoming County Courthouse ca. 1930s  
(See *Favorite Places* on page 6. Photo courtesy of WV State Archives)


# Think global, act local – a historic preservation perspective

By Susan Pierce, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

During the last several months, our office completed a series of local public meetings to assess the goals and objectives of the statewide historic preservation comprehensive plan. We have been talking and thinking about local issues as we develop the revision to our statewide plan. This reminded me of the current environmental catchphrase, “think global, act local.” The phrase is attributed to Sir Patrick Geddes, a Scottish town planner and social activist of the early 20th century. In his 1915 book “Cities in Evolution,” he states that “‘Local character’ is thus no mere accidental old-world quaintness, as it mimics think and say. It is attained only in course of adequate grasp and treatment of the whole environment, and in active sympathy with the essential and characteristic life of the place concerned.”

That’s a lot to consider. West Virginia’s towns are changing in part due to the environment around them. In the Eastern Panhandle, the picturesque small towns are surrounded by overwhelming development. In the southern coal counties, downtown storefronts are empty due to the changing economy and the easy access to regional malls. Regardless, these places continue to con-

vey local character. Efforts by planners, historic landmark commissions and Main Street programs address the continued vitality of local communities. As Geddes states, local character derives from its entire environment. We must address this as we draft our revised state plan. How will we describe the character of West Virginia as it continues to change on local levels in response to economic fluctuations as well as community expansion or retrenchment? At our public meetings, we considered the character of West Virginia through the historic preservation efforts of 12 communities. Results of these conversations will be included in our draft statewide plan.

This global question can be answered by looking at local examples. In this issue of *Details*, we highlight the First Ward School, the New River Gorge Bridge and the changing character of Wyoming County. We provide a listing of our most recent grant awards for survey and planning activities as well as development grants. If we act locally in efforts of historic preservation, how will this impact our state? Please share your thoughts with our office by November 15, 2013. We hope to have a draft by early 2014. We look forward to hearing from you. 

The activity that is the subject of this newsletter has been financed with Federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.



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# Success Story: First Ward School

*By Holly Wiedemann (AU Associates Inc.), with Johan Graham (AU Associates Inc.), and Logan Smith (Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission). Photos by Erin Riebe and courtesy of Elkins HLC.*



**First Ward School, Elkins, ca. 1908**

**I**n 1910, the book “School Architecture” cited the First Ward School of Elkins, WV as a “building with fine architectural lines and artistic substantial appearance.”

The First Ward School was completed just two years before, in 1908. Shortly after its completion, residential development around it increased significantly. The neighborhood was comprised primarily of working-class families living in vernacular homes of popular American styles at the time. The school served the citizens of Elkins for nearly 70 years, until the mid-1970s when the Randolph County School Board



**Inside main entry, (above); Damage in a classroom (below), 2009**

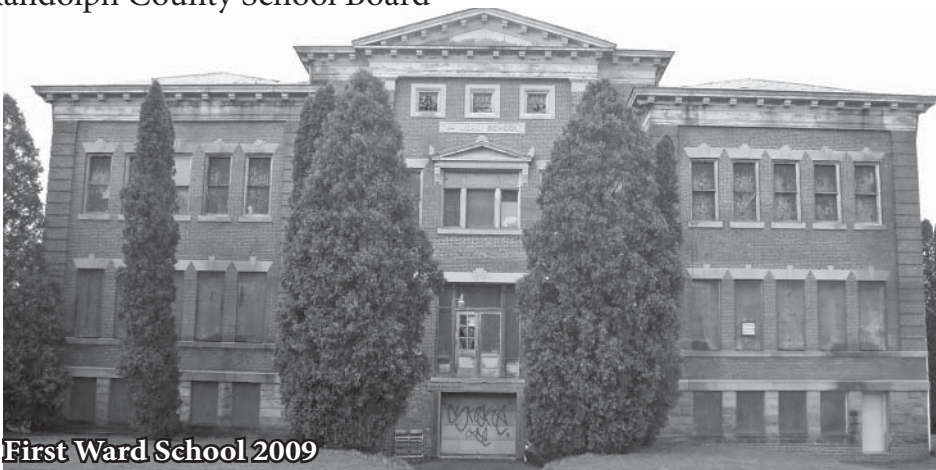


undertook a comprehensive building program. The county built six new schools from 1974 through 1976 to replace aging original schools, including First Ward. It closed in 1976.

For more than three decades, the First Ward School was used primarily as a storage facility for the Randolph County School Board. In 1981, it became the repository for the school system’s free textbook program. The school board installed natural gas heat and boarded up the windows to prevent sunlight from damaging the books. To create more efficiency in moving books, the front portico of the school was razed and a conveyor system was installed by cutting out a section of the first-floor hall near the original entrance.

Over the next 25 years, the roof continued to leak and the internal gutter and drainage system deteriorated. Concurrently, the exterior masonry was in very bad condition. These failing systems affected the interior. The water damage to the plaster generated extensive deterioration, which was further accelerated by the building’s lack of air conditioning.

The Citizens for Historical Opportunity, Preservation and Education in Randolph County (C-HOPE) along with the Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission (EHLC) recognized the historical and cultural importance of this imposing building and sought ways to save it. C-HOPE commissioned an architect’s study of the property in 2008. The property was subsequently listed in the National





**Hallways, (above & below) 2013**



**Inside an apartment, 2013**

Register in December of 2009.

Following the transfer of ownership from the school board to C-HOPE, the nonprofit applied for and received a \$62,000 grant from the SHPO for the stabilization and repair of the roof. The terms of the transfer gave C-HOPE five years to secure funding to rehabilitate the building for community use. If they were unable to achieve the promised outcome, the transaction included a reverter clause returning the property to the school board.


C-HOPE met its goal. The

completed development is exquisite, and has returned this important building to its former glory. The destroyed portico was able to be perfectly rebuilt and matched the original quarried stone. In fact, the exterior looks precisely as it did on the day it was originally opened in 1908.

Because the original architect recognized the healthy benefits of providing students with natural light, he designed First Ward School with plenty of windows. He utilized a modified “H” floor plan featuring a recessed entrance flanked by two projecting bays. Because of his exceptional design in 1908, we were also able to carefully integrate apartments sensitively into the classroom spaces, repurposing the cloak room areas and innovatively reusing portions of the original classroom slate blackboards.

The new owner of the property, Highland Community Builders,

is a nonprofit housing developer located in Elkins. The property is managed by the Randolph County Housing Authority. The building was completed and turned over to the housing authority in July of 2013. They have targeted seniors through a wellness collaboration program. This program pools the resources of the Randolph County Housing Authority, Davis Health System, Elkins Randolph County Senior Center and Elkins Randolph Health Department.


Today, thanks to the efforts of C-HOPE and its partners, First Ward School is again the building that brought it to the attention of the authors of “School Architecture.” The care for details and attention to restoration are a significant success story. A community gem was given new life and now provides affordable senior housing and a West Virginia treasure reminds us of our history and supports our future. 



**First Ward School, 2013**



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

These historic resources and districts were listed in the National Register of Historic Places January 2013 through August 2013. A complete list of historic properties in West Virginia is available on our website at [www.wvculture.org/shpo/nr](http://www.wvculture.org/shpo/nr). – Erin Riebe 

## Brookside Historic District

*Preston County*

Owners of Brookside Resort took advantage of its location close to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and created a respite from the city heat for residents of Washington, Baltimore, Cleveland and other cities. The Brookside cottages provided rustic yet comfortable accommodations. Brookside Farm produced homegrown meat, vegetables and dairy products for guests, and the Brookside Woods afforded ample opportunity for vigorous exercise and communing with nature. All these aspects were heavily marketed to potential guests throughout the East Coast. With the exception of a brief closure in the 1920s, the resort remained a popular destination throughout the 1930s. (Listed 5/8/2013)



**Brookside Historic District,**  
**Preston County**

## Thomas C. Miller Public School

*Marion County*

The construction of both the original section (1914) and the addition (1928) to the Miller School was prompted by Fairmont's burgeoning growth in the early decades of the 20th century. Following construction of the addition, the original section of the school served elementary students, and the annex was a junior high school. It remained a dual school until desegregation and then served junior high students until it closed in 2008. The school is a combination of the work of two master archi-




**Thomas C. Miller School,**  
**Marion County**

ects. Frank L. Packard, a prominent architect, especially in Ohio, designed the original section of the school. William B. Ittner, sometimes called the "Father of Modern School Architecture," designed the addition. The school, though a vernacular interpretation, displays elements of the Colonial Revival and Jacobethan styles of architecture. (Listed 5/8/2013)

## Morris Memorial Hospital for Crippled Children

*Cabell County*

Walter T. Morris, a local farmer, first envisioned a hospital for crippled children through witnessing his great-nephew suffer from a bone infection. When his great-nephew was successfully treated, Morris gratefully deeded his farm to the Huntington Orthopedic Hospital in 1930 specifically for the care and treatment of children. The hospital quickly outgrew Morris' house. After the property was conveyed to the city of Milton, Morris Memorial Hospital was constructed in 1936 with funding and labor from the WPA. The property included a farm; the hospital included a school and offered extracurricular activities. The self-sufficient hospital served as an important children's hospital, primarily serving polio victims, until the polio vaccine was considered a success and patient numbers declined significantly. (Listed 5/8/2013) 

# Favorite Places - Wyoming County

*By Shirley Stewart Burns, Ph.D.  
Photos from author and SHPO  
National Register files.*

**I**t has been a great blessing for me to have been born and raised in West Virginia. The entire state is special to me from its northern-most panhandle communities to the coal camps of the southern coalfields. There is so much to love about this state that I call home that it is difficult to pick just one favorite place. When pressed, however, I always have the same answer: Wyoming County is “Almost Heaven” to me.



**Bowers Homestead**

While growing up in Wyoming County, one of the ways my family would entertain ourselves would be to go for a Sunday drive along the meandering mountain roads of home. We did not set our destination for a specific area of natural or man-made beauty because around every bend was a beautiful mountain or a cozy, well-tended

homestead. I recall that our trips would frequently find us in the county seat of Pineville. One sight that was always special was the Wyoming County Courthouse which sat on a hill like a proverbial beacon. This neoclassical beauty built of locally quarried, native cut-stone greeted many travelers as they passed on their way to Welch, Princeton, Beckley, Oceana, and other points unknown to my little world. The beautiful architecture of the courthouse not only exuded power and au-

thority but also brought feelings of pride and awe to Wyoming Countians. You knew, then as now, simply by looking at the courthouse grandeur that this was a place of importance, and by mutual and reflected glory, Wyoming Countians were of great importance, too. The courthouse seemed to define the best of Wyoming County, and Wyoming County defined it. It was listed in the National

Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Some of my favorite times found our Sunday drive visiting Twin Falls State Park and a walk to the Bowers Homestead. The log home had long disappeared from the landscape by that time, but through careful cultivation and restoration activities, the groundskeepers of Twin Falls ensured that future generations of children, such as I, could catch a glimpse of what life was like for our ancestors. The home remains a popular destination to numerous visitors hoping to catch a glimpse of the past at this carefully restored home.

While we lived in the western part of the county in the small community of Matheny where my father's family first settled in the early 1800s, my mother's family was among the first settlers in the more rugged eastern portion of the county. Visits to my maternal grandparents would find us driving by the ornate Itmann Company Store, which was listed in the National Register in 1990. Built of native sandstone, this Classical Revival building is the most beautiful coal company building remaining in the coalfields. It appears so suddenly on the landscape that I have heard people gasp upon seeing it for the first time. On one occasion, I recall that my dad stopped so that our family could explore the massive stone building. While there,



he regaled us with his recollections of visiting many company stores in the county. He spoke of the use of scrip, the coming of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and the coal miner's place in this history. It was surely a foreign concept for me to hear that at one time coal miners like my daddy did not receive actual money to spend in a store, but rather were paid for their labor in scrip, which were metal coins that were good at a particular company store. I was proud to realize that my family was part of this rich historical legacy and that both of my grandfathers and my daddy worked with the UMWA to ensure that they could, among many other things, spend actual dollars even at company stores like this one.

Before we reached the steep mountain ridge of my mother's home place, we would travel through Mullens, which was just about the largest town in my young world. I loved visiting the G.C. Murphy store and the local diners. Mullens was also the "big city" to my mother and her family when she was growing up, and she would delight me with tales of their past experiences in the town. Even now, when I walk along the streets of Mullens, I envision it at the peak of its glory when the coalfields were booming, the coal trains whirled through the town and a photograph of my aunt, a beautiful young woman at the time, smiled out from the storefront in an advertisement

for the G.C. Murphy store. This town, which is so prominently featured in the memories of my family, was entered into the National Register in 1993. Mullens is not simply a nice collection of historic buildings to me. It is more; it provides tangible,




**Howard Street, Mullens, ca. 1923**

concrete evidence of memories that my family has shared with me. It is tangible evidence of our history.

While there may be places in the state that some find more aesthetically pleasing and, some may argue, with more historical significance, there is nowhere in the state that is more special to me. The story of these historic places is my story. It is the story of my ancestors that forged this rugged land, and it is the story of my family, who still call it home. It is



**Wyoming Hotel, Mullens, ca. 1920**

this love of family and history that resulted in my completion of a doctorate with a focus on Appalachian and West Virginia history. No matter where I have found myself in this great world, my treasured and heart-worn memories always find me returning to Wyoming County. My passion for our rich history and my memories continue to inspire my personal and professional pursuits. To this day, whenever I cross the county line back into my beloved home, I breathe a sigh of contentment. I am home, both physically and spiritually. That is why Wyoming County remains my favorite place not only in West Virginia but in the world. If you find yourself travelling in the beautiful southern coalfields, it is my fervent hope that you will give Wyoming County, with its many remnants of our history, a chance to convey its magnificence to you as well. I think you will be glad that you did. 



**Author with her parents outside their home in Matheny, 1974**

# Making History - The New River Gorge Bridge

*By Erin Riebe*

*Photos from the West Virginia State Archives*

**I**n May, I found myself in a harness, fastened to a safety cable 876 feet above the New River in Fayette County. With some gentle nudging and encouragement from Benjy Simpson, Managing Member of Bridge Walk, LLC, and Tyler Evert, Division of Culture and History's photographer, I stepped out onto a 24 inch wide catwalk just below the deck of the New River Gorge Bridge.

Several months earlier, when the Division of Culture and History began planning activities associated with West Virginia's sesquicentennial celebration, I was asked by Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith how the National Register staff could contribute. Though we came up with a good list of worthy projects, we proposed preparing a National Register nomination for the New River Gorge Bridge. The bridge has profound importance to West Virginia and is a symbol of the continuing evolution of our state since its establishment on June 20, 1863 (see a brief summary of the bridge history and significance on page 12).

Since much of my time at work is spent reviewing and processing nominations written by others, I was excited to have the

opportunity to conduct research and write the nomination for such a significant historic resource. The New River Gorge Bridge was important when it opened in 1977 and continues to be important today. It has become a symbol of our state, voted overwhelmingly in 2005 by the public as the single image

to represent West Virginia on the state quarter.

To adequately photograph and document the bridge, I scheduled a meeting with Benjy with no intentions of ending up in a harness. He convinced me that I would regret it later if I did not take this opportunity to explore



**New River Gorge Bridge nears completion**



**Final pieces come together for the arch of the New River Gorge Bridge**




the bridge firsthand. Thus, I geared up in a harness and off we went. Once I stopped focusing on the vibration of the bridge and the substantial distance between me and the river rafters below, I was able to actually listen to Benjy, who was sharing a wealth of information and history of the bridge and surrounding gorge area. I began to appreciate the enormity of the bridge and realize the obstacles engineers and ironworkers faced in its design and construction. A year earlier, Benjy led a tour for a handful of those ironworkers along the catwalk. Their role in the construction of the New River Gorge Bridge was as important as the engineers who designed the massive structure to span the deep gorge.

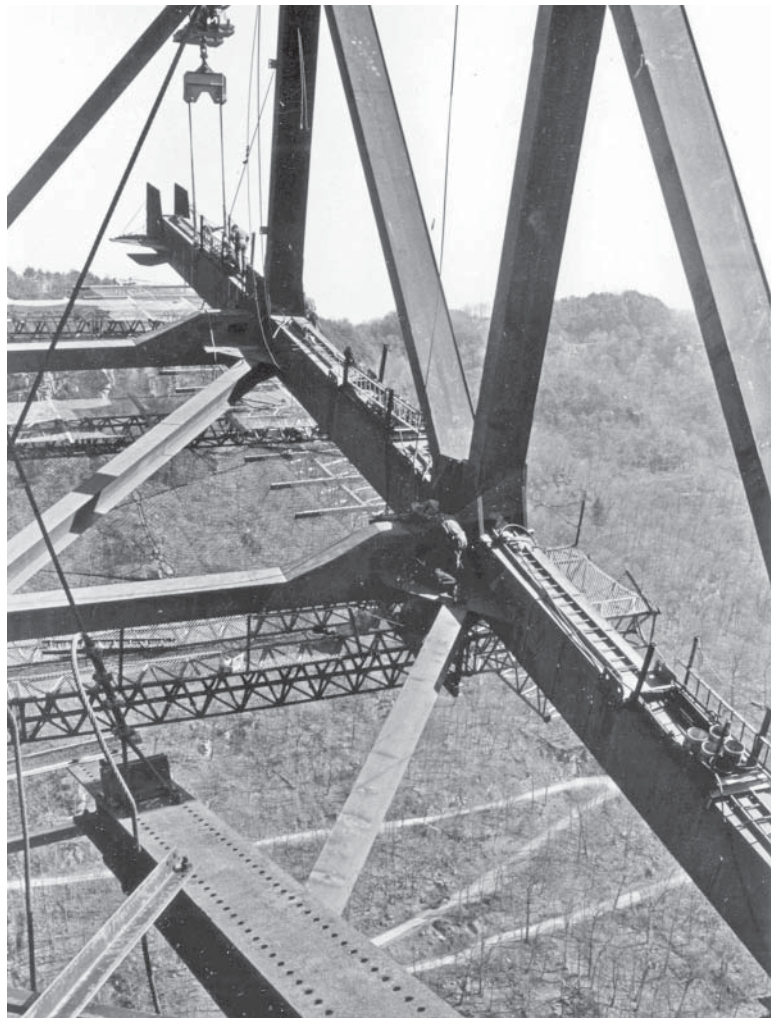
To help me understand their contribution, Simpson put me in touch with Clarence “Spud” Chandler, who began working on the bridge when he was 21 years old. At the time, Spud was an apprentice with Local 301 of the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental, and Reinforcing Ironworkers. For two years he commuted daily from Charleston, a distance of about 50 miles, to work on the bridge and eventually completed enough hours on this job to become a journeyman ironworker.

“It was a big deal,” Spud explained when I met with him. “It was the greatest project in the United States at the time.” Spud described to me a typical

working day and shared humorous anecdotes about his time working over the New River. He talked about taking a dip in the New River in the hot summers and how their lunches froze in the winter. He recalled the day the cable towers collapsed and described an accident when one worker died and several others were injured. Overall, though he worked on many projects throughout his 36-year career as an ironworker, Spud said, “it was an honor” to work on the New River Gorge Bridge as even then, the significance of the project was obvious. Of his fellow apprentices and journeymen, he said, “I got

to work with superheroes.”

While I enjoyed researching and writing about the design, construction, and opening of the bridge, it is moments like those on the catwalk and meeting with Spud that made this project memorable. Thinking back to my time under the deck of the bridge, holding on tightly to the railing, I asked Spud whether the height of the project bothered him. He replied, “Not really... the steel was three feet wide.” Men like Spud, with the fortitude and bravery to embrace the unknown, built this lasting symbol of ingenuity and resourcefulness. 



**Close-up look at the steel members as the bridge is being built**

## GRANTS AWARDED

**T**he West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office announces the following grants that the Archives and History Commission awarded this past spring.

The survey and planning grants (S/P) are funded through the annual Historic Preservation Fund of the National Park Service for use primarily by Certified Local Governments to conduct historic preservation activities.

The development grants (D) are funded by the West Virginia Legislature for the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic resources, which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information about these grant programs, contact Pam Brooks at 304-558-0240 ext. 720.

### **Berkeley County -**

Berkeley County Historic Landmark Commission received \$2,500 to present a Realtor Training Workshop in Martinsburg. (S/P)

Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks and Recreation received \$27,500 to assist with roof replacement on the Poor House Farm Park Building in Martinsburg. (D)

### **Boone County -**

Boone Madison Public Library

received \$35,500 to assist with roof replacement on the Boone Madison Public Library in Madison. (D)

### **Cabell County -**

J & Lenore Kaiser & David E. Gerlock Foundation, Inc. received \$19,960 to assist with restoring the exterior of the Coin Harvey House in Huntington. (D)

### **Fayette County -**

Coal Heritage Highway Authority received \$80,000 to replace the roof on the Patteson/Deering Building in Mt. Hope. (D)

Dr. Scott Keffer received \$15,125 to assist with the foundation and roof on the Tyree Tavern in Ansted. (D)

Town of Fayetteville received \$25,000 to assist with the replacement of the roof and gutters on the Old Fayetteville High School in Fayetteville. (D)

### **Greenbrier County -**

Greenbrier County Historic Landmark Commission received \$7,000 to conduct an architectural survey of Greenbrier County. (S/P)

Greenbrier County Historic Landmark Commission received \$35,000 to prepare a structures report on the Blue Sulphur Springs Pavilion in Greenbrier County. (S/P)

Ronceverte Historic Landmark Commission received \$12,000 to prepare a historic structures report for the Shanklin Grand Theater in Ronceverte. (S/P)

Victoria Harman received \$6,870 to assist with restoring exterior wood on the Cedars in Lewisburg. (D)

### **Hampshire County -**

Hampshire County Historic Landmark Commission received \$5,000 to prepare a National Register nomination for Fort Mill Ridge in Hampshire County. (S/P)

Hampshire County Historic Landmark Commission received \$10,500 to prepare four National Register nominations in Hampshire County. (S/P)

Mike Shaw received \$36,086 to assist with the restoration of the barn roof and fascia on Ridge-dale Farm Barn in Springfield. (D)

### **Hancock County -**

City of Weirton received \$15,000 to produce planning documents for the Margaret Mansion Weir Pool in Weirton. (S/P)

### **Hardy County -**

Oakland Hall Preservation Society, Inc. received \$4,836 to assist with restoring gutters, downspouts and chimney flashing on Oakland Hall in Moorefield. (D)

### **Kanawha County -**

Charleston Historic Landmark Commission received \$7,000 to conduct an architectural survey of the East End North area of Charleston. (S/P)

Larry L. Rowe received \$5,000 to produce 10,000 walking tour



brochures of the Old Malden Historic District in Malden. (S/P)

City of Charleston received \$22,500 to assist with exterior restoration of the Spring Hill Cemetery Mausoleum in Charleston. (D)

### **Marion County -**

City of Fairmont received \$9,100 to create design review guidelines for the Fairmont Historic District. (S/P)

Delaina Kucish received \$44,883 to assist with restoring masonry walls, soffits and fascia; gables; and windows on Our Country Corner in Fairmont. (D)

### **Mercer County -**

Melvin and Kim Ross received \$9,000 to assist with the roof replacement on the Gem Jewelers Building in Bluefield. (D)

### **Monongalia County -**

Morgantown Historic Landmark Commission received \$3,850 to conduct a Statewide Preservation Training Workshop in Morgantown. (S/P)

### **Ohio County -**

Wheeling Historic Landmark Commission received \$2,500 to present a Realtor Training Workshop in Wheeling. (S/P)

Kristoffy Real Estate, LLC, received \$37,943 to assist with restoring windows, bays, balconies, and façade on the Vivienne Apartments in Wheeling. (D)

YWCA of Wheeling received \$26,250 to assist with window restoration on the YWCA Building in Wheeling. (D)

Patrick and Nikki Lenz received \$18,846 to assist with restoring masonry on the Fischer-Lasch Farmhouse in Wheeling. (D)

### **Pocahontas County -**

The Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation, Inc. received \$7,960 to assist with restoring windows on the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace in Hillsboro. (D)

### **Randolph County -**


Beverly Historic Landmark Commission received \$12,000 to conduct a survey update and National Register Historic District Amendment for the Beverly Historic District. (S/P)

Elkins Historic Landmark Commission received \$2,500 to present a Realtor Training Workshop in Elkins. (S/P)

Davis & Elkins College received \$89,658 to assist with restoring gutters and the roof on the Graceland Inn in Elkins. (D)

Randolph County Housing Authority received \$11,150 to assist with restoring the porch roof, windows and gutters on the Bishop Apartments in Elkins. (D)

### **Tucker County -**

Thomas Historic Landmark Commission received \$15,000 to prepare a historic structures report on the Cottrill's Opera House in Thomas. (S/P) 



## **Preservation Calendar**

### **October**

**Archaeology Month -** see [www.wvculture.org](http://www.wvculture.org) for events and activities across the state.

**31 - Deadline for Survey and Planning Grant applications.**

### **March 2014**

**2nd or 3rd weekend - West Virginia Association of Museums Annual Conference - Exhibition Coal Mine, Beckley. See [www.museumsofww.org](http://www.museumsofww.org) for more information.**

**28-30 - 37th Annual Appalachian Studies Conference - "New Appalachia: Known Realities and Imagined Possibilities" - Marshall University, Huntington - more info at [www.appalachianstudies.org](http://www.appalachianstudies.org)**

### **April**

**1 - Deadline for Development Grant applications.**

West Virginia Division of Culture and History

## DETAILS

State Historic Preservation Office

The Culture Center

1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East

Charleston WV 25305-0300

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 2868  
Charleston WV 25301



## New River Gorge Bridge

*Fayette County*

The New River Gorge Bridge was the most expensive undertaking of the Appalachian Development Highway System, which was authorized in 1965 to provide economic development in isolated areas and to supplement the growing interstate system, providing access to areas within the region. The opening of the bridge in 1977 reduced the drive across the gorge at this location from a 45-minute drive on winding and often treacherous roads to less than one minute. Once it opened to regular traffic, the bridge played an important role in the development of the area, linking areas north and south of the gorge as well as West Virginia's Corridor L communities with the rest of the state. At the time of construction, the bridge's arch made it the longest steel arch bridge in the world. It remains the longest single-span steel arch in the United States and the third highest bridge in the country. Though the bridge employs a fairly conventional design, its construction represents a number of construction achievements. The engineers and ironworkers overcame major obstacles due to its enormous scale and the then-remote Appalachian location. (Listed 8/14/2013) *For the rest of the new National Register listings, please see page 5.*