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HISTORICAL REVIEW



Wheeling in 50 Objects

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UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW



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EDITING & LAYOUT: Seán Patrick Duffy

PHOTO EDITING: Kyle Knox, Seán Patrick Duffy, Erin Rothenbuehler

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ARTICLE SUBMISSION: Those interested in submitting an article, contact Seán Duffy at: UOVHR@ohiocountylibrary.org

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UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

Single Copies: \$5.00

Founded by the Wheeling Area Historical Society in 1968, the **UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW** is the only publication of its kind in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. Dedicated solely to local history topics, it has become a treasured publication and valuable tool for studying and learning about our geographic area. Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation (WNHAC, later Wheeling Heritage) continued the tradition, editing and publishing the **REVIEW** from 2010-2018. Ownership of the **UOVHR** publication was transferred in the second half of 2018 to the Ohio County Public Library in Wheeling.

UOVHR content has historically included articles, transcribed documents, book reviews, and accounts of the economic, political, social, and cultural history of the greater Wheeling area contributed by historians, researchers, and scholars.

OCPL is honored to publish the **UOVHR** and continue this great tradition for years to come.

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On the Cover

Wheeling is a smallish city with a big history.

But what if you had to define Wheeling to someone completely unfamiliar — by naming only 50 objects?

We gave it a try. What did we get right? What did we get wrong?

We welcome your feedback and heartfelt opinions.

UOVHR@ohiocountylibrary.org

UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

This edition was originally planned as part of the Wheeling 250 observance of 2019—which would have meant the enormously challenging prospect of identifying 250 objects! As often happens with plans, reality intervened, and those plans were changed.

Our goal with this edition is more modest and manageable: Wheeling in 50 objects. Even so, there were difficult questions to answer: What is an “object”? Is it small like a cigar, or can it be huge, like a building? Does the object still have to exist somewhere? And the most difficult question of all: Which objects are most quintessentially Wheeling?

We decided to keep part of the 250 observance to help define the theme, ie, the symbolism of the relatively new city flag of Wheeling, which was designed and implemented for the Wheeling 250 project in 2019. Specifically, the flag’s symbolism serves as a guide. And since many people probably don’t know the intended meaning behind the symbols, this presents a very good learning opportunity.



The horizontal blue bars, for example, represent the Ohio River and Wheeling Creek. Adding the white field, the three bars together represent the primary modes of transportation, historically: River, Road, and Rail. Each of the five gold navigation stars on the flag represent a major era from the city's past: Indigenous; Frontier; Transportation; Statehood; and Industrialization.

All of this information can be found on the city's website at

<https://www.wheelingwv.gov/city-seal-flag>.



The descriptions are summarized here and will be expanded upon in the introduction to each chapter:

The Indigenous Star: Local tribes included the Wyandot, Shawnee, Delaware (Lenape), and Mingo. The place name “Wheeling” derives from Lenape word “Wee-lunk” (“place of the skull”).

The Frontier Star: Zane brothers settlement of the area; Fort Henry and its 1777 and 1782 sieges.

The Transportation Star: Wheeling as a hub of early modes of transportation: River, Road, Rail.

The Statehood Star: Involvement in the Civil War; Wheeling as the birthplace and first state capital of West Virginia-- the only state born of the Civil War; abolishment of slavery.*

The Industrial Star: Wheeling as a manufacturing center (iron, steel, cut nails, glass, tile, etc.), immigrant influx (Germany, Ireland, Poland, Italy, Lebanon, Greece, Eastern Europe, etc.) as a result of growing industry, formation of labor movement and unions.

*Note: As part of Virginia before the Civil War, Wheeling was a slave city (with a major slave market) and remained a segregated city into the middle of the 20th century.

Further defining the term “object,” we decided that, if human-made, they must be relatively small and moveable (even if a machine is needed for lifting). So objects that are attached to the land and essentially immovable, are disqualified. Otherwise we might spend the entire issue

talking about famous buildings! Natural objects, altered by humans, with historical significance, can be huge. More later on that point (see page).

Regarding the question of “existence,” we compromised. If an object is so quintessential such that it’s exclusion would offend the intellect, and if said object was almost certainly real and tangible at one time, and if we believed it had been recreated with reasonable certainty as to its probable appearance, it will be included. You will encounter a few of examples, particularly from the mists of antiquity, in the following pages (see page 18).

So, with those caveats in mind, we hope you enjoy our look at the Friendly City in 50 Objects, wherever they might now reside.

And if you think we excluded something vital that should have been included, feel free to berate us on social media, by snail mail, by email at UOVHR@ohiocountylibrary.org, or even in person. But please keep in mind that our hearts were in the right place and be polite. We’ll return the favor. And we will publish a list of key omissions based on your feedback. What’s more, we’ll be hosting an exhibit and pop-up museum (we used to call them “show and tells”) based on this theme next Spring. Check the OCPL website for details in the New Year.

<https://www.ohiocountylibrary.org/>

Happy reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seán Duffy", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Seán Duffy, Editor



The Irreplaceable Legacy of Wheeling's Ancient Indigenous Peoples

by Hank D. Lutton

No one knows when people first set foot upon the land that today we know as the city of Wheeling, West Virginia. One of the earliest known sites of human occupation in North America, Meadowcroft Rockshelter (36WH297), is located fewer than 25 miles northeast of Wheeling. Paleoindians first sheltered at Meadowcroft at least 16,000 years ago. Paleoindians who also lived in Ohio County exploited resources along Wheeling Creek where archaeologists have discovered their distinctive fluted spear-points. Countless generations of indigenous peoples have lived, adapted, and flourished in these verdant, fog-clad creek bottoms and “rugged, green rolling hills.” For 16 millennia, Native Americans hunted the game of this land, fished its waters, fired pots formed from its clay, ground its stone into tools, and fashioned ornaments from bone, shell, and cannel coal that they wore and buried with their dead.

Despite this vibrant indigenous history, much of the prehistoric past of Wheeling remains poorly known and largely unwritten. According to the West Virginia state inventory, 32 archaeological sites are recorded in and adjacent to Wheeling, of which only 18 are prehistoric. This meager sample underrepresents the extent to which indigenous cultures extensively remade the natural landscape which European-American farmers, town-builders, and industrialists later effaced as they wholly transformed the prehistoric landscape. At least 17 sites containing burial mounds from the Woodland Period (1000 B.C.–A.D. 1200) once stood throughout Ohio County, including seven within Wheeling. In Elm Grove, the 15-foot-high Linton Mound (46OH94) was leveled by a farmer to expand his field. As workmen dug footers to accommodate the expanding town, they disturbed hundreds of burials from Native American villages that once stood in the shadow of the mound.

Among the plowed and desecrated graves in Elm Grove, laborers found sherds resembling this graceful globular pot (See Object 1, page 14) probably made in the waning years of the Late Woodland Period (A.D. 400–1200) and found near Wheeling, its constricted neck allowed Native peoples to fasten a cord around the vessel and suspend it over a cooking fire. A potter adorned the vessel by pressing a cord-wrapped paddle against the damp exterior before it was fired. Like ceramics of the period, this specimen is characteristically thinner than earlier pottery and was tempered with bits of crushed freshwater mussel shells.

Table Rock, the sturdy sandstone mushroom sculpted by erosional forces and altered by humans, is Wheeling's most visible indigenous landmark (Object 2). On the table's upper surface Native Americans—most likely shamans—carved and pecked at least four petroglyphs. So realistic is the glyph of a spiral snail shell that an archaeologist initially mistook it for a fossil. A kidney-shaped and two abstract designs flank it. Two additional petroglyph sites, one less than two miles northeast of Table Rock on a crescent-shaped sandstone ledge, exist in Ohio County. The Clifton Heights Petroglyphs (46OH130) that once overlooked Elm Grove depicts 19 glyphs and is exhibited at the Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex in Moundsville. Petroglyphs date to the Late Prehistoric or Protohistoric Periods (A.D. 1200–1690) and represent elements of ideology and mythology of the Ojibwe and other Algonquian tribes.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the Lenape (Delaware), Mingo, and Shawnee inhabited the Upper Ohio Valley in multi-ethnic villages. Despite 16 millennia of indigenous habitation, France and Great Britain vied to assert rival claims coveting the Ohio River basin. In August 1749 a French expedition lead by Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville ceremonially buried a leaden plate at the mouth of Wheeling Creek (Object 3). Along with five others, the plates renewed King Louis XV's claims to all territory drained by these tributaries of the Ohio River. The plate was buried at the foot of a large elm tree on a bank of Wheeling Creek, at its junction with the Ohio—the river which the Iroquois called Ohi:yó meaning good or great river. No vestige of this plate has been found.

The next year the Ohio Company of Virginia hired skilled surveyor and frontiersman Christopher Gist to explore and identify lands in the Ohio Valley for potential settlement (Object 5). Gist camped at “a Creek called Wealin or Scalp creek”—the same place that Iroquois guides told Céloron was named Kanonuara. Gist derived Wealin from Weelunk, Lenape for “place of the head” which is the equivalent of Kanonuara in Iroquois. Historians have interpreted this place name to be evidence that the decapitated head of a prisoner was placed on a sharpened pole as an ominous warning against the transgressions of interlopers. In more recent years, this translation has been recast—imbued with biblical connotations—as “place of the skull” (Object 4).

The aged sycamore formerly located on the grounds of Monument Place, once one of Wheeling’s venerable landmarks, met its regrettable demise in 2019 (Object 6). Because of the breadth of history encompassed by the tree’s estimated 300-year-old life, it was dubbed the “Witness Tree.” Already a mature tree in the second half of the eighteenth century, this stately sycamore likely provided shade and shelter at creek’s edge for weary travelers on the nearby Mingo Path. As Christopher Gist departed his encampment at Weelunk, he followed the same ancient trail trod by indigenous peoples traveling between the Ohio River and the Monongahela River and passed within sight of this sprightly tree.

Perhaps no object is more recognizable yet misguided as the six-foot-tall bronze Mingo Statue standing atop Wheeling Hill (Object 7). Dedicated in 1928, the statue depicts a Mingo warrior, bow at his feet, with outstretched arm “extending greetings and peace to all wayfarers” approaching Wheeling. Astonishingly, this symbol of non-violence stands mere feet from the location where pursuing Native American warriors compelled Major Samuel McColloch to make a desperate, death-defying, headlong plunge from the ridge during the 1777 siege of Fort Henry. The statue represents an imagined past—one fancifully constructed to justify the European-American seizure of indigenous lands and the dispossession of its peoples. By dismissing the armed invasion by which this land was usurped, the statue obfuscates the devastating effects of disease, warfare, and harsh treaties in an endeavor to provide some absolution from guilt.

While the farmer's plow, the developer's machinery, and the looter's shovel have irreparably diminished and obscured the indigenous legacy, traces of the last 16 millennia persist even when the evidence remains unseen. Wheeling's unwritten indigenous past—preserved in the stories of Native Americans, accounts by early European-Americans, and in the soil beneath our feet—lies all about us. It is the responsibility of those who value our heritage to preserve the irreplaceable legacy of Wheeling's ancient indigenous peoples. Although their story began 16,000 years ago, it is not yet fully known.

Hank D. Lutton is an archaeologist and curator at Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex in Moundsville. He earned a BA in political science from the George Washington University and a MA in anthropology from the College of William & Mary. He conducted post graduate studies in archaeology at Boston University. Hank previously worked as an archaeologist at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He is a board member of the Historical Society of Mount Pleasant in Jefferson County, Ohio.

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Woodland Mounds in West Virginia. Darla Spencer. American Heritage. 2019

Object 1: Late Woodland Period Globular Cooking Pot, A.D. 400–1200



Read more:



Location: Found near Wheeling. Now housed at Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex, Moundsville, WV. wvculture.org/explore/grave-creek-mound/

Object 2: Table Rock Petroglyphs, A.D. 1200-1690

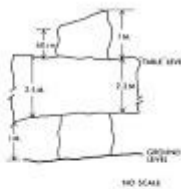


TABLE ROCK PETROGLYPHS C. 48 Oh 38

Plate 101



John L. Swauger, Field Sketches, 27 July 1900



NO SCALE

OCPL has in its collection numerous archival photos of passersby posing with the irresistible Table Rock.

Location: Off Cherry Hill Road near Table Rock Farm. While the rock itself is sedimentary sandstone from the late Carboniferous Period, or approximately 300 million years old, the human-carved petroglyphs date to A.D. 1200–1690.



Designs Nos. 1, 2



Designs Nos. 3, 4

Read more:



FROM: ROCK ART OF THE
UPPER OHIO VALLEY

BY: JAMES L. SWAUGER
Artwork by
CLIFFORD J. MORROW JR.

Object 3: Captain Pierre Joseph Céloron de Blainville's Plate, ca. 1749

L'AN 1749 DV REGNE DE LOUIS XV ROY DE
 FRANCE NOVS CELORON COMMANDANT DVN IS DE
 TACHEMENT ENVOIE PAR MONSIEVER LE M^{IS} DE LA
 CALISSONIERE COMMANDANT GENERAL DE LA
 NOUVELLE FRANCE POVR RETABLIR LA TRANQVILLITE
 DANS QUELQUES VILLAGES SAUVAGES DE CES CANTONS
 AVONS ENTERIE CETTE PLAQUE A L'ENTREE DE LA RIVIERE ET
 SUR RIVE SEPTENTRIONALE DE KANOUOUARA, QUI SE
 DECHARGE A L'EST DE LA RIVIERE OYO AUTREMENT
 BELLE RIVIERE, CE 13 AOUT POVR MONVMENT DV RENOV-
 VELLEMENT DE POSSESSION QUE NOVS AVONS PRIS DE LA DITTE
 RIVIERE OYO ET DE TOUTES CELLES QUI Y TOMBENT
 ET DE TOUTES LES TERRES DES DEUX COTES JVSQVE
 AUX SOURCES DES DITTES RIVIERES VINSI QUE ONT
 JOUY DV DV JOVIR LES PRECEDENTS ROYS DE FRANCE
 ET QUELS SISONT MAINTENVS PAR LES ARMES ET
 PAR LES TRAITTES SPECIALEMENT PAR CEUX DE
 RISVICK DVTRCHT ET DAIX LA CHPELLE

*Fac Simile of the Leaden Plate Buried at the Mouth of Wheeling creek,
 called by the French River Kanououara, August 13, 1749*



This mural commemorating French exploration of the Ohio Valley was dedicated in 1981 in what is now WesBanco Arena.

Translated text:

“In the year 1749, of the reign of Louis the 15th king of France, we Celoron, commander of a detachment sent by Monseur the Marquis de la Gallisoniere, Governor General of New France, to re-establish tranquility in some Indian villages of these cantons, have buried this Plate of Lead at the mouth and on the north bank of the river Kanououara, which empties into the easterly side of the Ohio river, otherwise Belle Riviere, this 13th day of August, as a monument of the renewal of the possession we have taken of the said river Ohio, and of all those which empty into it, and of all the lands on both sides as far as the sources of the said rivers, as enjoyed, or ought to have been enjoyed by the kings of France preceding, as they have there maintained themselves by arms and by treaties, especially those of Ryswick, Utrecht, and Aix fa Chapelle.”

-History of the Pan Handle; Being Historical Collections of the Counties of Ohio, Brooke, Marshall and Hancock, West Virginia, published by J.A. Caldwell, 1879.



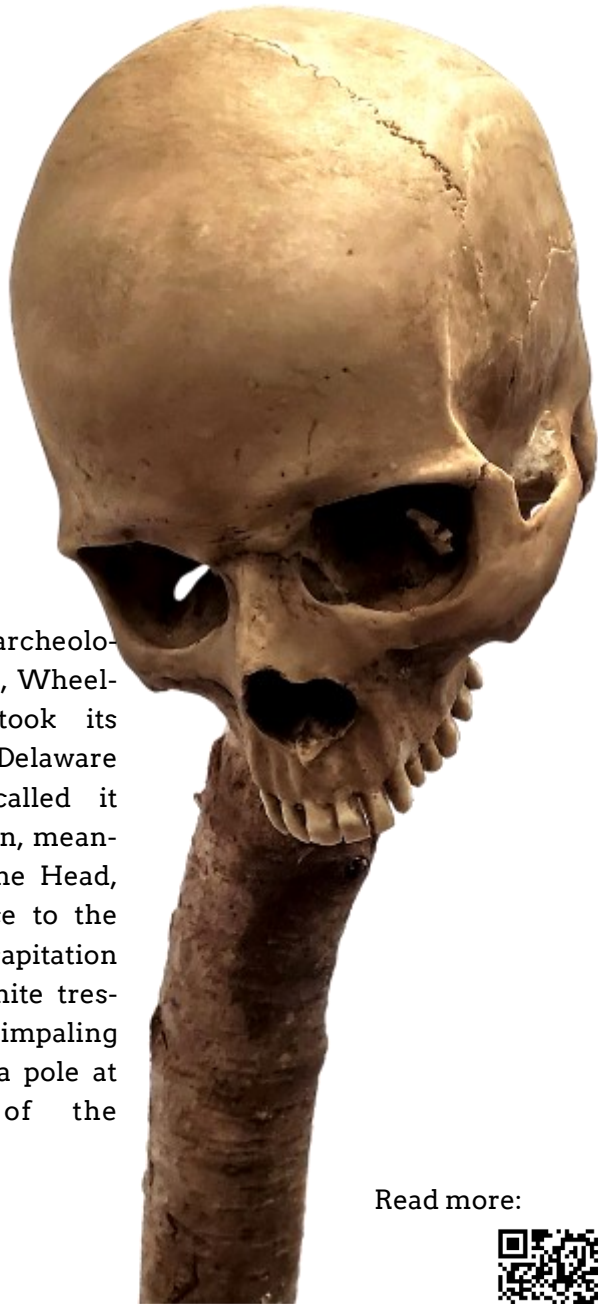
Location: The Wheeling version (one of six) was never found and is said to still be buried under the silt of Wheeling Creek. This nearly identical version is housed at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. See:

<https://virginiahistory.org/learn/celoron-plate>

Read more:



Object 4: Place of the Skull (Replica)



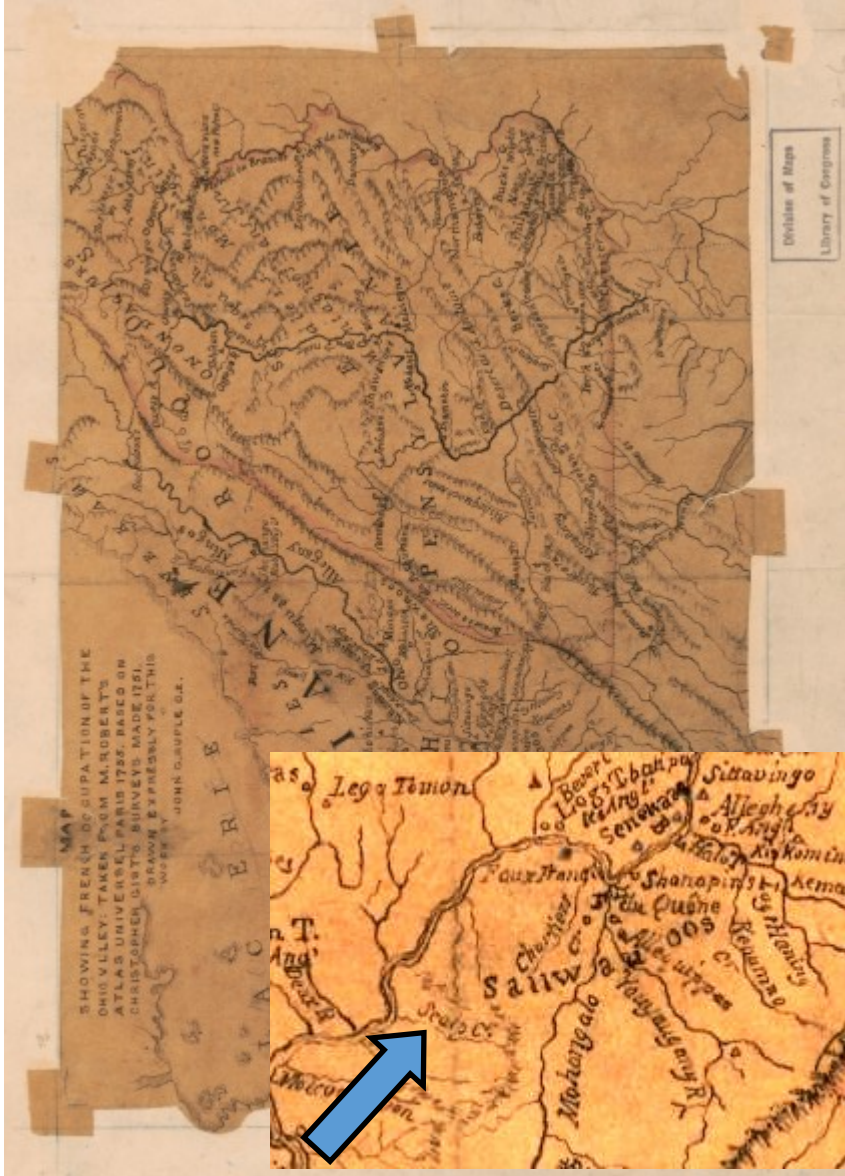
According to archeologist Delf Norona, Wheeling, Virginia took its name from the Delaware Indians who called it Wilunk or Wiilin, meaning, "Place of the Head, having reference to the scalping and decapitation of a luckless white trespasser and the impaling of his head on a pole at the mouth of the creek..."

Read more:



Location: This reproduction is part of the OCPL's main exhibit area.

Object 5: Christopher Gist Map, ca. 1751



Map showing French occupation of the Ohio Valley : taken from Mr. Robert's Atlas universel, Paris 1755 : based on Christopher Gist's surveys made 1751. Courtesy Library of Congress. Closeup shows "Scalp Creek."

Read more:



Object 6: The Witness Tree, 1720s



Photo above courtesy Joanne Cochran Sullivan .

Read more about
Monument Place:



Location: Pieces of it are everywhere by now. And it's stump is making a defiant comeback at Monument Place. This piece is held by the OCPL. It was carved for an Ebenezer Zane display.

Object 7: The Mingo, 1928



Love it or hate it:
it is iconic.

Read more:



Location: Top of Wheeling Hill.



Romancing Reality: Wheeling's First European Settlers

by Dr. Christina Fisanick

Perhaps the most celebrated era of Wheeling history, the Frontier period, is also the most romanticized. The facts: In the 1760s, several families traversed the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania to settle near present day Wheeling. These families include names known to most Wheeling school children and history buffs alike: the Wetzels, the Zanes, and the McCullochs. While most accounts attribute the acquisition of this land along Wheeling Creek to something called Tomahawk rights—land ownership established by notching trees with an ax—the truth is far more complicated.

The Wheeling Creek settlement was established on stolen ground. The Ohio Natives had not agreed to any treaties regarding their land; therefore, the first European families of the area faced frequent attacks by the Ohio Natives until the Treaty of Greenville (1795) moved King George's Proclamation line farther north. These waves of frontier violence led Virginia's governor, Lord Dunmore, to request support from the state's militia. As a result, Ft. Henry was built in what is now downtown Wheeling to protect the European settlers and to prevent the British and Indian advancement.

In addition to McCulloch's great leap over Wheeling Hill (see page 10), another folk legend was born out of the defense of Fort Henry. Native and Loyalist forces attempted to capture the fort in September 1782. During the fight, the fort's defenders depleted their ammunition stores. Knowing that if one of the men made a run for ammunition from the Zane's homestead he would likely be killed on sight, Ebenezer Zane's sister, Betty, volunteered to make a run for it. Arriving at the Zane blockhouse, she filled her apron (some sources say a tablecloth) with gunpowder and headed back to Fort Henry. This time her attackers were wise to her actions and began firing, but Zane arrived

back at the fort unscathed, and the fighting resumed. While recent scholarship has called the identity of the fearless woman into question, what we do know is that a woman risked her life to ensure that Fort Henry remained under American control.

Another early Wheeling family, the Wetzels, fought alongside the Zanes that day. Most memorable among them, Lewis Wetzel, became a vicious Native killer. Wetzel and his brother were taken captive by Wyandot Indians when the former was thirteen years old. Although they escaped after two days, Wetzel taught himself to be an excellent marksman and how to kill with a tomahawk and knife. Following the deaths of his brother and fathers at the hands of Natives in 1786, Wetzel swore revenge on all Indians and began a rampage that would last for years, which led to the slaying of more than two dozen Natives. Among his most well-known murders, Wetzel killed Seneca Chief Teguntah, who was attempting to peacefully negotiate the Treaty of Fort Harmar near Marietta, Ohio, an act that caused Wetzel to lose favor with frontiersmen who had previously supported his one-man killing sprees.

While Wetzel had been labeled a hero for nearly 200 years, most modern historians see him as a vengeance-obsessed murderer. In fact, some accounts say that Wetzel lured Natives to his cave near what is now known as Tunnel Green and killed them. The remains of Wetzel's once multi-roomed hideout are difficult to reach, but that doesn't stop curious hikers from seeking Lewis Wetzel's Cave and imagining what it would have been like to stand there keeping watch the way Wetzel did in the late 1700s.

The Boggs family was also present at both of the Fort Henry sieges. In fact, Lydia Boggs (later known as Lydia Boggs Shepherd Cruger), whose father served as militia captain, met her future husband, Moses Shepherd, at the 1782 siege. Together they became the center of the Wheeling social elite as wealthy plantation owners with high-ranking political connections who visited their decadent mansion, Shepherd Hall. Plantations were uncommon in the northern part of Virginia, but the Shepherds land stretched out over a large portion of what is now Elm Grove and was worked by number of slaves, whose quarters were located not far from the detached kitchen.

Among their many decorated visitors, which included six US presidents and the Marquis de Lafayette, famed senator Henry Clay was perhaps the most frequent and certainly the most influential. Senator Clay was leading the way on the ever-growing National Road. Legend has it that one night the hard-drinking Clay met his match in Lydia Shepherd, who could easily hold her liquor as well. She persuaded Clay to route National Road directly by their plantation, which required the construction of what is now known as the oldest bridge in West Virginia. The three-span stone arch, built over Wheeling Creek in 1817, continues to serve the people of Wheeling and travelers passing through via National Road.

To show their gratitude, the Shepherds commissioned a monument to Clay to be displayed on their grounds, which eventually became known as “Monument Place” after Lydia’s death. Lydia became a widow in 1832. A year later she married Daniel Cruger and renamed Shepherd Hall, Stone Mansion. Towards the end of her life, she became the center of controversy when she signed an affidavit that Molly Scott, not Betty Zane, made the death-defying run for ammunition that secured Fort Henry in 1782. Already a well-entrenched legend, Lydia’s narrative did not sit well with locals. In 1867 she died an eccentric recluse at 101 years of age at Stone Mansion, which is now home to the Osiris Shrine Temple.

While it remains challenging to sort the fact from fiction in Frontier-era Wheeling history, it is clear that those years were filled with chaos and bloodshed along with courage and resilience. Most European settlers pursued life, liberty, and happiness, even if at times it was at the expense of the native Indians who already lived here and African American slaves forced to work the land.

Dr. Christina Fisanick is a professor of English at PennWest California where she teaches expositing writing, digital storytelling, and creative non-fiction in the English Department and the Honors Program. In collaboration with Robert Stakeley of the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, Dr. Fisanick is the co-author Digital Storytelling as Public History: A Guidebook for Educators (Routledge 2020). In addition, she is the author of nearly fifty Wheeling history articles, which have appeared in Archiving Wheeling, InWheeling, Weelunk, and other local publications.

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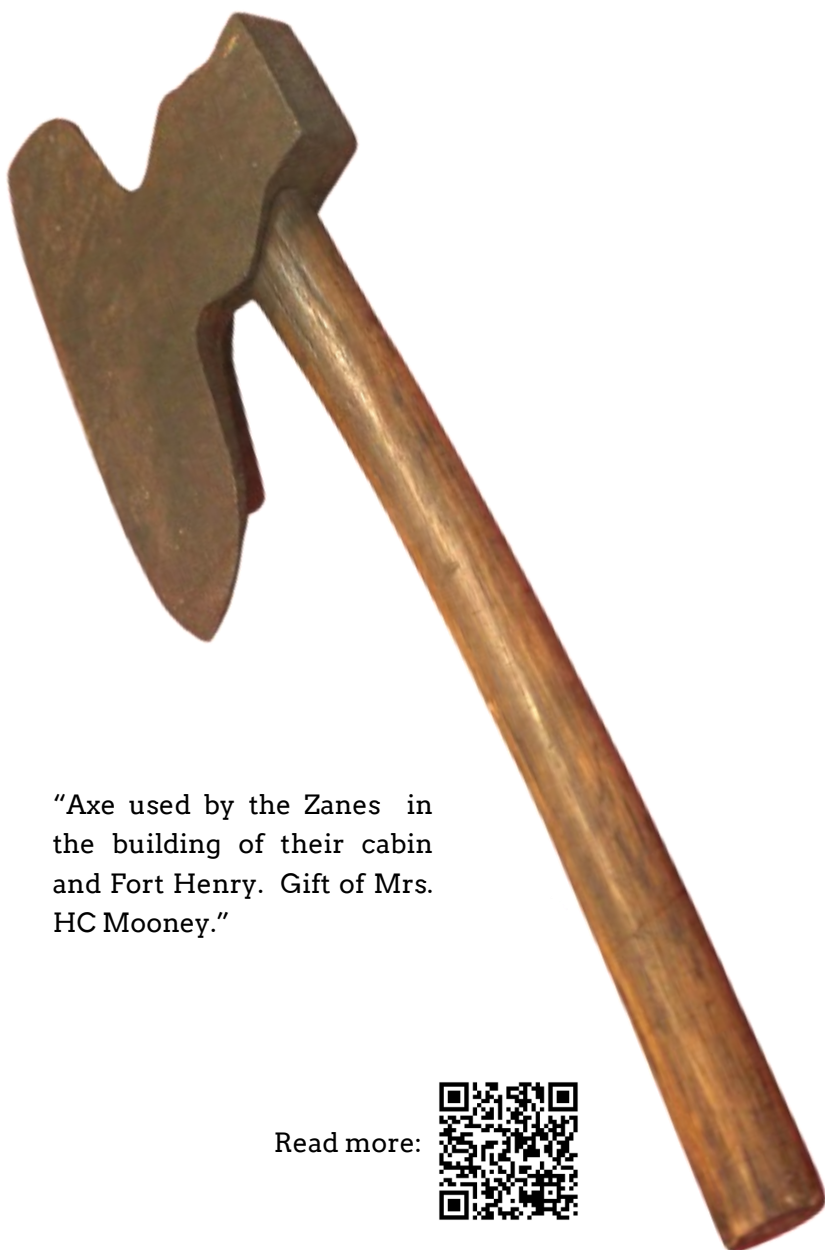
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Roxby, Joe. *The Heroic Age: Tales of Wheeling's Frontier Era*, William Hinton Publishers, 2000.

Valsania, Maurizio, *First Among Men: George Washington and the Myth of American Masculinity*, 2022.

Object 8: The Zane Axe, 1770s



"Axe used by the Zanes in the building of their cabin and Fort Henry. Gift of Mrs. HC Mooney."

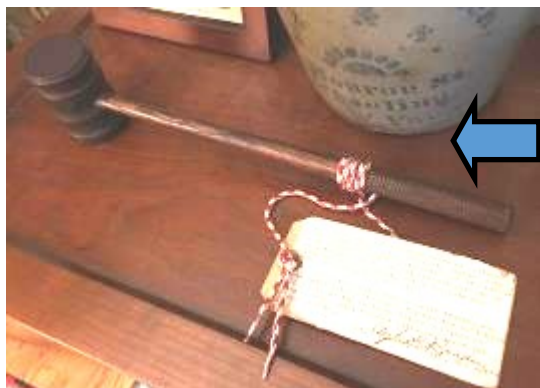
Read more:



Location: Mansion Museum, Oglebay Park. Courtesy the Museums of Oglebay Institute.

Object 9: Fort Henry or Zane Log Cabin "Timbers," 1770s

Timbers at right comprise the fire-place mantle in the Ihlenfeld Dining Room at Oglebay Park's Wilson Lodge. A plaque reads: "part of a log cabin built by Ebenezer Zane."



The tag reads: "This gavel was made by Thomas Maywood Gallaher from timbers out of the Elizabeth 'Betty' Zane home at Wheeling ...Capt. Clyde E. Braden..."

Read more:



Location: Private collection of Ryan Stanton.

Object 10: Faris Painting of Fort Henry, 1882



Painting by J. A. Faris (father of famed Wheeling architect Frederick F. Faris), "The Siege of Fort Henry," which at one point hung at the Ohio County Public Library on Market Street. The painting was created in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the second siege on Wheeling's Fort Henry.

Read more:



**Location: West Virginia State Museum.
Charleston, WV. All rights reserved.**

Object 11: Betty Zane's Bonnet, 1770s



Read more:



The famously heroic apron may be lost to time, but this is a fairly interesting alternative.

Location: Martins Ferry Historical Society
Museum.

Object 12: Rifle belonging to Lewis Wetzel, 1770s



Whether the stories are true or apocryphal, the cave itself is legendary.

Read more:



Location of Rifle: West Virginia State Museum. Charleston, WV. All rights reserved.

Object 13: John Whetzel's "Inventory," ca. 1780

[illegible]

Lewis's father's list includes: "1 bull...1 gray colt...15 hogs...1 skillit...1 whip saw...2 grindstones..."

Location: OCPL Archives.



Rivers, Rails, and the Road: Wheeling as a Transportation Hub

by Dr. David Javersak

Nineteenth century improvements in transportation fostered economic growth and allowed Americans to move ever westward. Road construction, the application of steam power to river craft, bridge building, and the extension of railways to the Ohio and beyond helped make Wheeling the premier city in western Virginia and the upper Ohio River basin.

The Census of 1820, taken two years after completion of the National Road to Wheeling, showed a population of 1567, a small number for a place first settled in 1769. Ten years later, the next census recorded 5221 citizens, a staggering increase of 233.18%, the largest percentage increase in any census before or since! By 1860, more than 14,000 people made their home in Wheeling, now incorporated and ranked 63rd in the top 100 largest American cities. This census showed the dominance of Wheeling in the Northern Panhandle: of the 45,358 people residing in the four northernmost counties of Virginia, 22,422 lived in Ohio County.

The National Road increased the already growing river traffic, and Wheeling boomed: a writer in the mid 1840s said of this place: “it’s a fascinating place that would warm any man’s heart who wanted to do business.” It was during this decade that Wheeling earned the moniker, The Nail City.

By 1880, the population more than doubled to a figure of 30,737, a number larger than the projected census of 2020. What the National Road did for Wheeling before 1860 was dwarfed by the impact of railroads which connected the city’s manufacturers to to the growing urban centers in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic

states after 1860. As its economy expanded, the city continued to attract more people, most from Northern states, but also from Ireland and Germany in the mid 19th century and southern and eastern European nations by 1900.

To be sure, nail production was huge--50 million kegs produced by 1890--but products of every sort made Wheeling known throughout the nation: tobacco products, especially cigars, glassware, china, iron and steel materials, calico printing, meat packing, food products to name only a few. Beverly Fluty, local historian and a West Virginia History Hero, compiled a list of all items manufactured in town: it covered 11 single-spaced pages!

Transportation companies employed thousands; in 1925, for example, the B&O repair shops and freight yards employed over 500 men and women. Traction companies grew as the city expanded, and by the early 20th Century, there were upwards of 120 miles of track, connecting not only all neighborhoods, but outlying areas like Woodsdale, Elm Grove, Moundsville, and West Alexander. In the mid 1920s, Wheeling Traction Company employed 556 workers.

The Census of 1910 identified Wheeling as the state's most important city, and it provided the proof: its manufacturing companies outnumbered those in Huntington by a factor of three; Wheeling had more wage earners than the next five ranked cities combined; and the value of products produced in Wheeling exceeded that found in Huntington, Parkersburg, Charleston, Martinsburg, and Bluefield together.

The footprint of transportation was stamped across the city: the 1908 B&O Station on 17th Street, the Terminal Bridge, tunnels beneath Wheeling Hill, the Hempfield Tunnel and Viaduct, freight yards, like the one now occupied by the Ohio County Public Library, and the Mozart Incline. Shortly after Henry Schmulbach built his incline to reach his park on the bluff above 43rd Street, a group of postal workers from Pittsburgh attended a picnic in Wheeling: they took a train from Pittsburgh to Wheeling, then rode a trolley to the incline station, and then went up the incline to a pavilion where they enjoyed food and sampled Mr. Schmulbach's beer.

As the 20th Century progressed, transportation changed with it: the trolleys and their tracks disappeared; railroads lost much of their commerce to trucking and their passengers to modern highways and air travel; bridges like Terminal and the Steel Bridge, which once took trolleys to Wheeling Island, were torn down; and the wharf was replaced by a parking garage, only several decades later razed to establish Heritage Port.

Transportation advances in last half of the 20th Century Wheeling, including the Ohio County Airport, Fort Henry Bridge, Wheeling Tunnel, Interstate Highway System, and the Route 2 widening, could not stem the erosion of the area's economy. Wheeling became part of America's Rust Belt. Population of the city peaked in 1930 and declined in every census since 1940.

Wheeling residents can still appreciate elements of their historic transportation infrastructure:

- Heritage Port
- Elm Grove “Humpback Bridge” (see page 24)
- National Road Mileage Markers (page 36)
- Suspension Bridge (page 37)
- Hempfield Tunnel and Viaduct
- Bike trails that follow old rail lines
- B&O Station (WVNCC)
- Main Street Bridge
- Remnants of viaduct constructions in Elm Grove and along Wheeling Creek
- Steel Bridge remains (page 44)

For Dr. Javersak’s bio, see page 1.

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Object 14: Steamboat Mooring, ca. 1830s



Location: Wheeling's Heritage Port.

Read more:



Object 15: National Road Mile Marker, Ca. 1830s



"Congress mandated that a stone marker be placed on the north side of every mile to tell travelers how many miles they were from Cumberland, MD, the starting point of the [National Road] ... As of 20[22], six such markers remain in the narrow northern panhandle of WV, which carries just 10 miles of the old highway." -Library of Congress



Location: National Road, Triadelphia.

Read more:



Object 16: Suspension Bridge Clevis, 1849

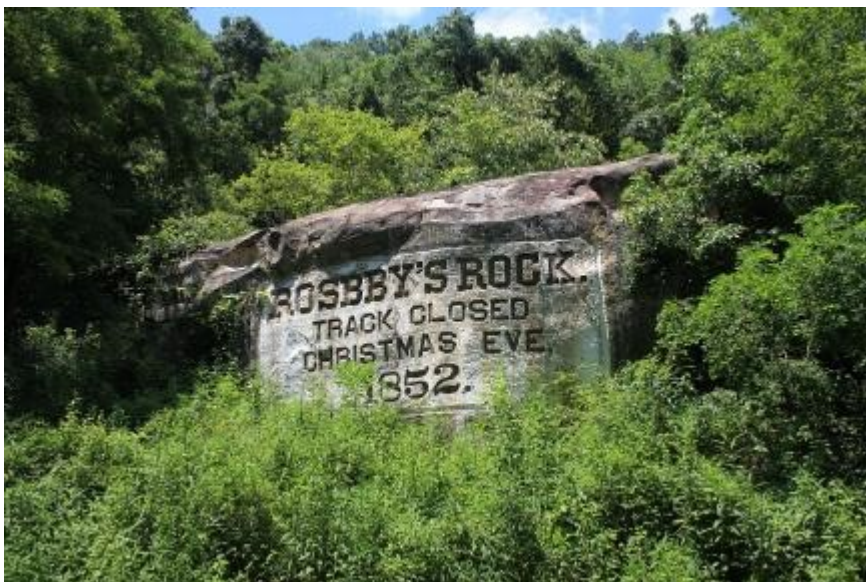
"Underneath the intersection of the 10th and Market Streets lies the massive anchorage for the eastern end of the suspension bridge. These anchorages consist of large wrought iron eye-bars linked together to form a chain. These chains are embedded in a brick vault which covers nearly the entire intersection of 10th and Market Streets. The end of the chain emerges in the anchorage vaults. The ends of each of the original twelve cables are fastened to the end of the eye-bar chain by clevises. " Dr. Emory Kemp in "The Wheeling Suspension Bridge Tour"

Read more:

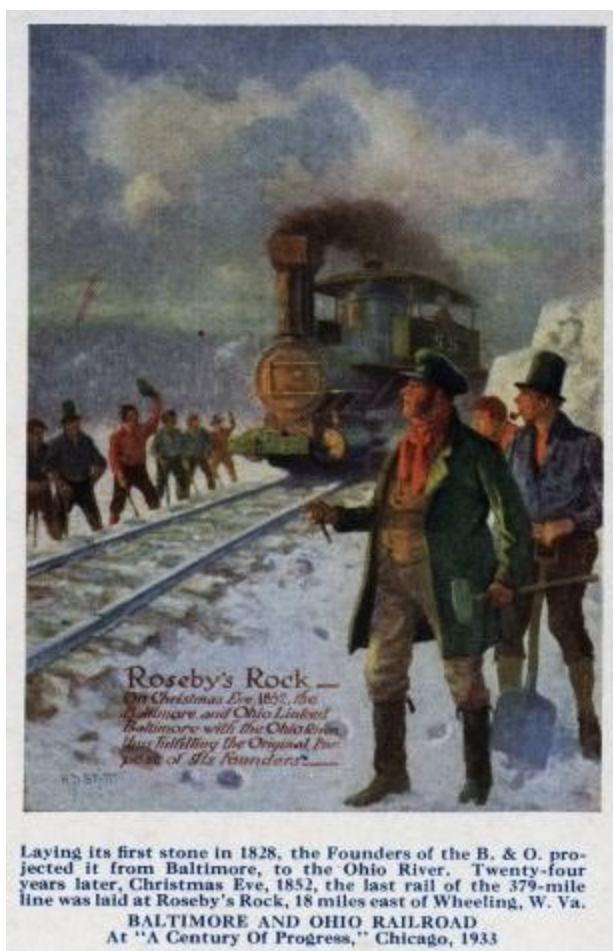


Location: OCPL Archives.
Probably removed in the
renovation of 1983 or 1998.

Object 17: Rosby's Rock, 1852



Location: Big Grave Creek, Rosbys Rock, WV.

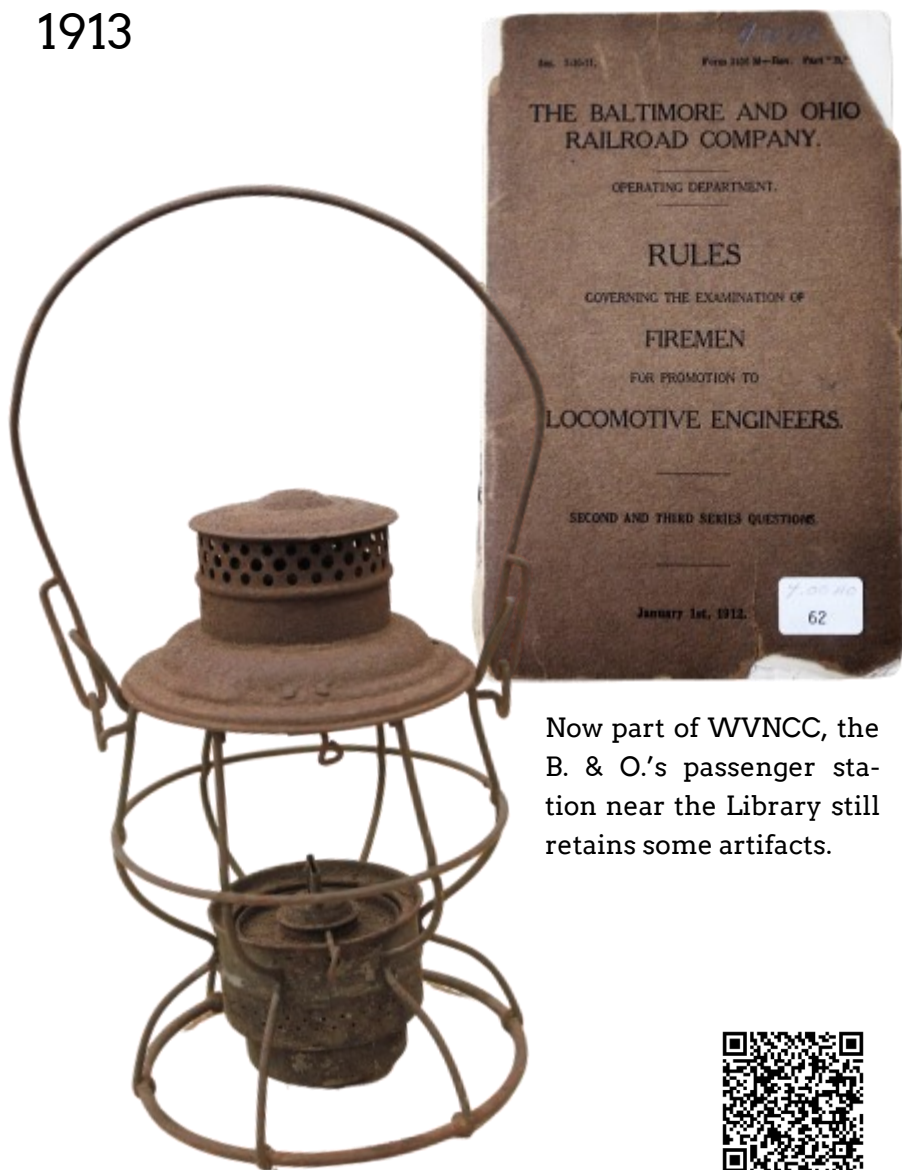


Read more:



900 cubic yards of sandstone, 68 feet long, 22 feet tall and 24 feet thick. On Dec. 24, 1852, railroaders drove the last spike, connecting the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad from Baltimore to Wheeling. To mark the occasion, the men carved the rock, which was named for Roseby Carr, the man in charge of the B&O construction gangs. The spelling remains a mystery, but given the amount of time and labor necessary to complete such a massive carving (nearly ten feet high and 22 feet wide with letters as tall as 2 feet chiseled 2.5 inches into solid rock), it is unlikely to have been a careless typo.

Object 18: B. & O. Railroad Lantern, Spikes & Semi-Centennial Ribbon, 1913



Now part of WVNCC, the B. & O.'s passenger station near the Library still retains some artifacts.



Lantern, booklet, spikes, courtesy West Virginia Northern Community College.



To help Wheeling celebrate the semi-centennial (50th birthday) of West Virginia, the B. & O. Railroad brought a "Parade of Locomotives," (antique trains) to the Hempfield Yard where the Library now stands for an exhibition billed "Great Exhibit of Railroad History of the World." The old yard had been "cleaned up and electrically lighted" for the occasion. This commemorative ribbon was one of the souvenirs of the day.



Ribbon courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum, www.borail.org.

Object 19: Wheeling's Last Street Car, #639 (1924)



Street Car Tracks

Last used in 1948 on Market Street near 16th, the larger "girder-rail" (left) was widely used in busy streets to guide cars along the track. The "T-rail," is a much lighter version of what railroads use. Location: OCPL Archives, courtesy City of Wheeling.



#639 began life in Wheeling as old #39 (seen at above on Main Street in 1945). It is a Cincinnati curved-side built in 1924 for Wheeling Traction Company, later Co-Operative Transit Company. It was painstakingly restored by the good people at the Seashore Trolley Museum in Maine.

Read more:



Location: #639 now resides at the Seashore Trolley Museum, 195 Log Cabin Rd, Kennebunkport, ME.

<https://trolleymuseum.org/>

Object 20: Steel Bridge Handrails, 1891



Opened in 1891 and demolished in 1962, following the opening of the Fort Henry Bridge in 1955. Closed to pedestrians in 1948, the Steel Bridge carried streetcars to the Island. Old photo shows the 1924 collapse. The railing can be seen in upper left corner.

Location: Adjacent to the Hawley Building, Wheeling



A Star is Born: Wheeling During the Civil War

by Dr. Joseph Laker

Wheeling played its most important role in national and state history during the Civil War and its aftermath. In 1860 the city was the second largest in Virginia after Richmond, the capital. With a population of over 14,000 it was an industrial hub with closer economic ties with northern states than with the eastern part of Virginia. In 1849 a suspension bridge was built across the Ohio River. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad reached Wheeling in 1852, and numerous steamboats built in Wheeling and other cities traveled up and down the Ohio River. The city featured a free public school system, public library, telegraph service, hospital, several newspapers, the new multi-story McClure hotel with 165 rooms, and a three story federal building which contained a post office, custom house, and federal court.

While Wheeling was located in a slave state and the city had a slave auction block located near its north market (see page 48), there were in 1860 only 50 slaves living in its Ohio County. Virginia contained almost 500,000 African-American slaves in 1860, but less than 50,000 lived in areas that would make up West Virginia. In Wheeling most slaves, such as Lucy Bagby (see page 49), were household servants. Since Wheeling stretched along the banks of the Ohio River, slaves sometimes were able to elude their masters and slip across into the free state of Ohio. Lucy was one such slave who escaped to Cleveland. Her owner, William Goshorn, tracked her down and forced her returned to Wheeling in accordance with the Fugitive Slave law. She came back, but eventually gained her freedom.

Upon the election of Abraham Lincoln as the nation's president in November, 1860, South Carolina voted to secede from the Union. It was followed by six southern states, which sent delegates to a convention to write a constitution for the Confederate States

of America and elect Jefferson Davis their president. When Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion, voters in Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina decided to join the Confederacy.

In northwest Virginia, strong opposition to secession arose immediately and its politicians called for holding a convention in Wheeling. The first Convention met first in Washington Hall in Wheeling, but soon transferred its deliberations to the third floor courtroom of the Custom House. The first convention, May 13-15, 1861 called for resistance to secession; the second, June 11-25, elected Francis Pierpont as Governor of Virginia and other state officials to replace the disloyal Governor Letcher in Richmond and his followers. The federal government recognized Pierpont's government as legitimate. A third convention met in the courtroom to write a constitution for a new state separate from Virginia. In May 1862, Governor Pierpont and the legislature of the Reorganized State of West Virginia approved of the separation of Virginia into two states as required by the United States Constitution. Lincoln signed the statehood bill on December 31, 1862, with the proviso that the State's constitution be revised to eliminate slavery and be approved by the voters of the new state. The Constitution was approved 28,321 to 572, but many opponents refused to vote.

Governor Pierpont of the Reorganized State of Virginia established his executive offices on the second floor of the Custom House at 16th and Market (see page 51). There he appointed government officials and judges to replace those who were loyal to the Confederacy. He kept in close contact with military authorities like General Kelley and commissioned new officers in the Virginia military units loyal to the Union and his government.

The legislature took over the three story Linsly Institute several blocks away at 14th and Eoff (see page 54). When Arthur Boreman was inaugurated as West Virginia's first governor on June 20, 1863, Pierpont moved his headquarters and the legislature of the Reorganized State of Virginia to Alexandria, Virginia. Boreman set up his executive headquarters in Pierpont's office; the newly elected legislature met in the Linsly Institute building.

When Virginia seceded, both sides began to organize military units to seize control of territory. The Confederates began to de-

stroy the B & O railroad, its bridges and tunnels. Colonel Kelley was ordered to restore and protect the railroad, which he did at the battle of Philippi. However, during the battle, Kelley was shot in the chest and expected to die. He was attended to by Joseph Thoburn, the 1st Infantry surgeon. Kelley was carried on a litter for miles to reach a train station. Later, Thoburn was aided by Dr. John Frissell of Wheeling, and Kelley survived to be made a General and given the job of protecting the B & O Railroad throughout the war.

Some months after the battle of Philippi, General William Rosecrans, the Union commander in West Virginia, created the Wheeling Ambulance with the assistance of Major John Letterman a medic who later organized the Union army's Ambulance Corp (see pages 52-53) . An engineer, Rosecrans designed a light ambulance wagon pulled by two horses that could carry six wounded soldiers. The wagon rested on springs that cushioned the ride for the wounded.

It is estimated that 32,000 soldiers from West Virginia fought for the Union and 18,000 for the Confederacy. At the end of the long and dreadful conflict communities, both north and south, erected statues and monuments to honor those who sacrificed so much for their cause. Wheeling's Soldiers and Sailors monument was built and dedicated on May 30, 1881. It was placed on the south side of the new state capitol building. More than 15,000 people attended the ceremony, led by the Grand Army of the Republic veteran's group (see page 55), and marked by prayers, music, speeches, and a specially written poem by William Leighton.

Dr. Joseph Laker earned a history BA from Marian College, then spent two years teaching English in Japan. He earned his PhD in history at Indiana University, then spent 33 years at Wheeling Jesuit University.

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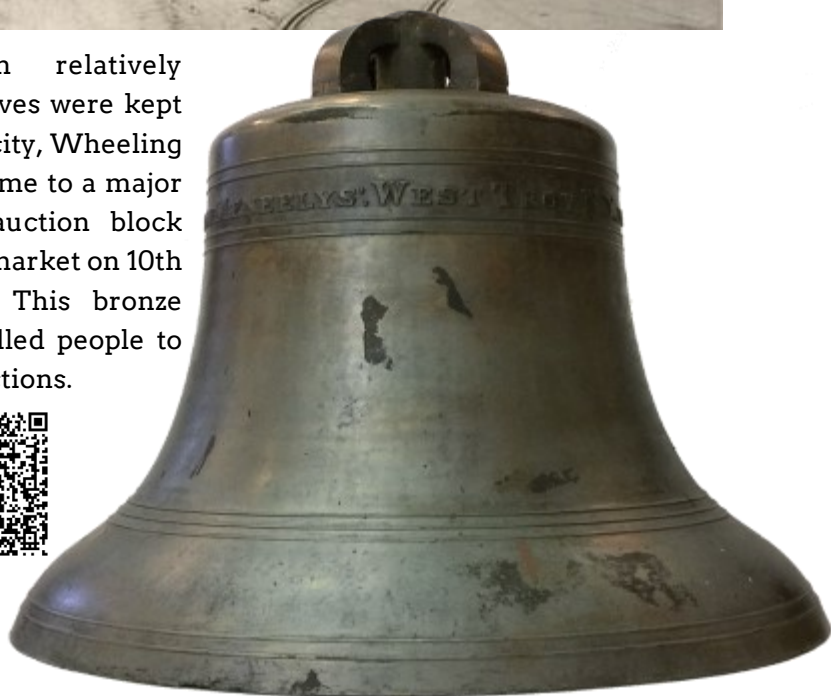
Patchan, S. *Worthy of a Higher Rank: The 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign Journal of Colonel Joseph Thoburn*. 2021.

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Object 21: Slave Auction Bell, 1854

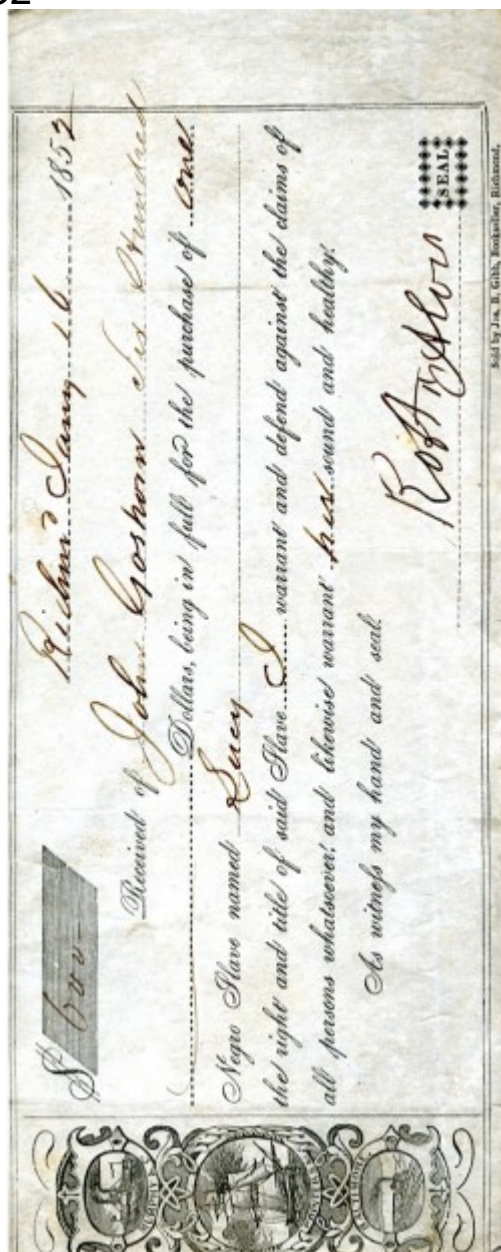


Though relatively few slaves were kept in the city, Wheeling was home to a major slave auction block at the market on 10th Street. This bronze bell called people to the auctions.



Location: Mansion Museum, Museums of Oglebay Institute.

Object 22: Slave Receipt for Lucy Bagby, 1852



Sara Lucy Bagby Johnson (1843-1906) was the last person prosecuted under the Fugitive Slave Act, Lucy was purchased in 1852 by John Goshorn of Wheeling for \$600. She escaped in 1860 to Cleveland, was captured and returned to Wheeling in 1861. She died a free person in 1906.

Read more:



Location: Wheeling University Archive; Scan courtesy Digital Library of Appalachia, Appalachian College Association.

Object 23: State Regimental Flag of the 7th (West) Virginia Volunteer Infantry



The 7th (West) Virginia Volunteer Infantry was organized at Wheeling, Grafton, Morgantown and other sites in 1861, and included men from Ohio County. The unit became known as the “Bloody 7th” because it fought in more battles and suffered more losses than any other WV regiment during the Civil War. It mustered out in 1865. Among the significant battles were Winchester, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and Petersburg.

1862

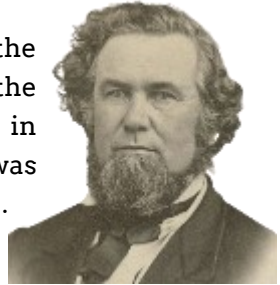
Read more:



Location: West Virginia Independence Hall Museum.

Object 24: Governor Pierpont's Desk, 1863

Pierpont was elected Governor of the "Restored State of Virginia" during the West Virginia statehood process in Wheeling. His desk sits in what was once his office in the Custom House.



Read more:



Location: West Virginia Independence Hall Museum.

Object 25: The Wheeling Ambulance (Replica)

Stationed in Wheeling during the early part of the Civil War, General William S. Rosecrans teamed with Major Jonathan Letterman (the “Father of Battlefield Medicine”), to design the lightweight and revolutionary Wheeling, or Rosecrans Ambulance, a hero of Antietam.



LOC image

1863

Location: Starkville Civil War Arsenal, Starkville, Mississippi.
Built by Duffy Neubauer. Image: jayscustomcreations.com.

AMBULANCE KNOWN AS THE WHEELING PATTERN.

Articles of Agreement

day of

18

by and between

Made and entered into this

Quartermaster for U. S. Army, for and in behalf of the United States,

and

Witnesseth:

FIRST—It is agreed that the said

and assigns, shall well and truly make, or have made, built and delivered, as herein stated,

description as follows, to wit:

AMBULANCE BODY.

Shall 8 feet 6 inches long, cut to oval, (including foot board,) 21 inches wide by 2 inches deep. Foot board 12 inches wide, 1-inch ash
stuff, and fastened by 3 bolts to sills; 6 cross bars in frame of body, front bar 21 inches deep, middle bars 21 inches wide

Four-wheeled Ambulances, of the size and

herein

This U.S. Army contract includes the specifications for the Wheeling Ambulance used by Duffy Neubauer to fabricate a painstakingly accurate replica. Courtesy Duffy Neubauer.

<https://www.starkvillecivilwararsenal.com/the-ambulance.html>
See the entire construction process.



Object 26: Key to West Virginia's First State Capitol Building, 1863



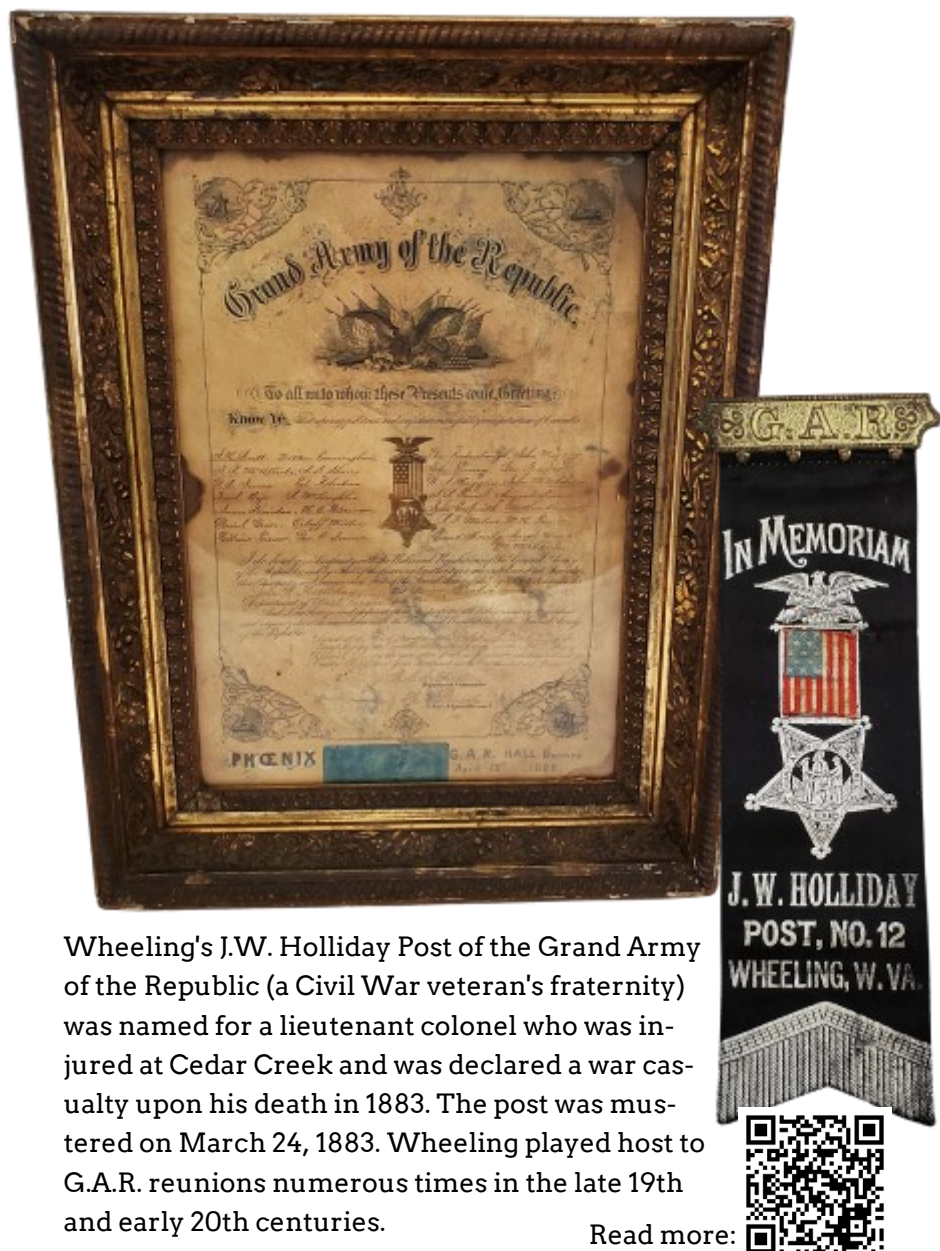
According to its label, "This is the key to the South front door of the old State House (Capitol) Wheeling, West Virginia. Presented July 26, 1932 to Mr. Geo. W. Oldham, Wheeling, WV." The Linsly building on Eoff served as West Virginia's first state capitol. Gov. Boreman had his office there.

Read more:



Location: First State Capitol building; courtesy Mary Ellen & Patrick Cassidy.

Object 27: Charter, Holliday Post, Grand Army of the Republic, 1883

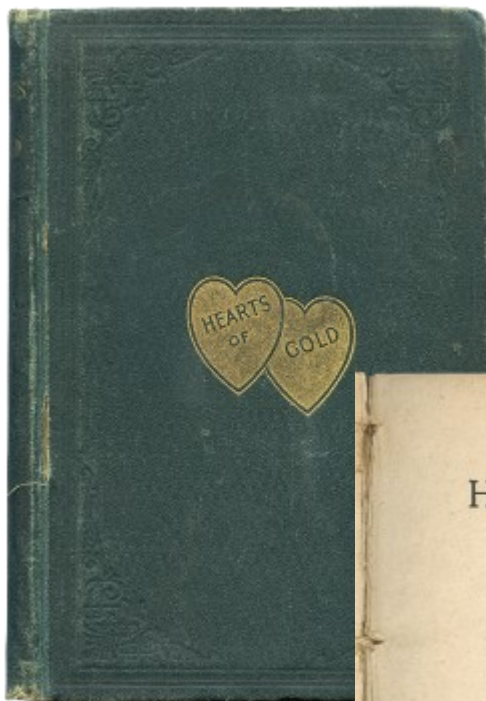


Wheeling's J.W. Holliday Post of the Grand Army of the Republic (a Civil War veteran's fraternity) was named for a lieutenant colonel who was injured at Cedar Creek and was declared a war casualty upon his death in 1883. The post was mustered on March 24, 1883. Wheeling played host to G.A.R. reunions numerous times in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

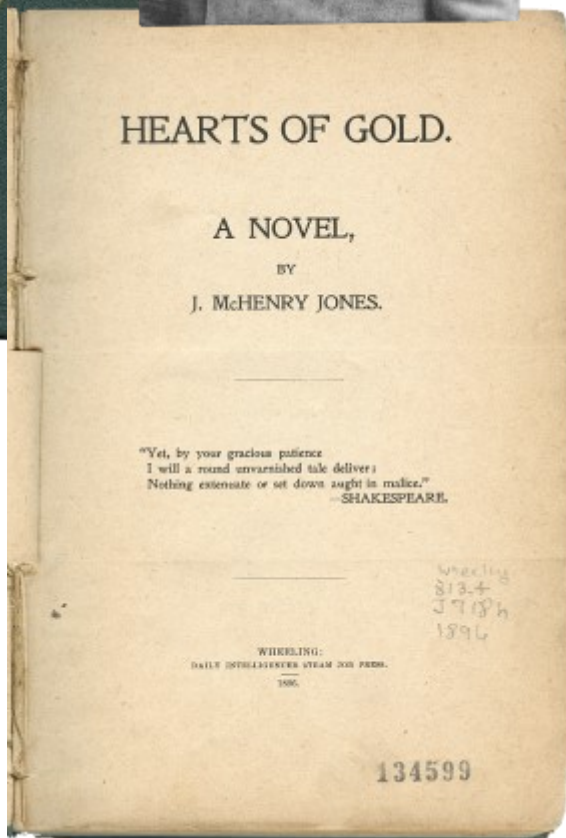
Read more:

Location: Archives of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Object 28: *Hearts of Gold* by James McHenry Jones (1st Ed.), 1896



James McHenry Jones was the principal at segregated Lincoln School when he wrote the novel *Hearts of Gold*, published in 1896. Among the issues facing African-Americans discussed in the novel were the rise of black education, press, lynching, and convict labor.



Location: OCPL Archives.

Read more:





Stogies & Steel: Industrial Wheeling

by Seán P. Duffy

“A cloudy day: do you know what that is in a town of iron-works? The sky sank down before dawn, muddy, flat, immovable. The air is thick, clammy with the breath of crowded human beings. It stifles me. I open the window, and, looking out, can scarcely see through the rain the grocer’s shop opposite, where a crowd of drunken Irishmen are puffing Lynchburg tobacco in their pipes.”—from *Life in the Iron Mills* by Rebecca Harding Davis

As Dr. Javersak noted in his chapter on Wheeling’s transportation infrastructure (see page 32), the combination of the Ohio River, the National Road, and railroads including the B. & O., rendered Wheeling a transportation hub. When readily available natural resources like coal and iron ore were added to the mix, Wheeling was transformed into a vibrant industrial city with an insatiable craving for cheap labor.

Those industrial jobs attracted immigrants. The first wave hailed from Germany and Ireland in the early nineteenth century. Wheeling soon was home to German-language newspapers, and several German singing societies, hosts of regional Saengerfeste (German musical festivals). Construction of the National Road attracted a large number of unskilled Irish immigrants road-builders. When the road reached Wheeling in 1818, many of them stayed. Railroad jobs drew more Irish and Chinese workers.

The prevalence of heavy industry and the vices that accompany it rendered old Wheeling a sooty, smelly place. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs like Anton Reymann, Henry Schmulbach, and Mifflin Marsh kept working men happy with ample supplies of beer, cigars and numerous other distractions. This lucrative activity eventually exploded beyond legality into what is now remembered as “Wide Open Wheeling,” a thriving market of vice operated by organized crime.

Wheeling’s rapid industrial growth created a seemingly endless supply of jobs in coal mining, where worker safety was a low priority, culminating in the 1924 explosion at Wheeling Steel’s Benwood mine, which killed 119 men, mostly immigrants.

Other industries included cut nail making (like La Belle), glass making (like North Wheeling's Sweeney firm and South Wheeling's Hobbs, Brockunier), tobacco (such as Marsh Wheeling Stogies and Bloch Brothers Mail Pouch chew), cloth (like North Wheeling's JL Stifel & Sons Calico Works), tile (Wheeling Tile), and steel production.

After the Civil War, a significant number of freed slaves from the southern states migrated north, and competed for many of the same jobs held by recent immigrants. As elsewhere, racial tensions escalated in Wheeling, which adopted "Jim Crow" segregation policies, the inequities of which were recorded and disseminated by the YWCA and brave citizens like African American lawyer Harry H. Jones.

The rapid industrial growth also stimulated the rise of labor unions. Working class areas of the city like Goosetown and South Wheeling became unionist and socialist hotbeds.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, economic strife and political unrest in nations such as Italy, Greece, the Ottoman Empire, Lebanon, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russia, and Poland, combined with the huge number of available industrial jobs, brought a massive influx of new immigrants to American cities, including Wheeling.

The number one employer of immigrants was, of course, Wheeling Steel Corporation. From its Benwood plant to its East Wheeling Corrugating plant, and all of the mines and mills in between, the company employed more immigrants than any other.

Naturally, immigrant neighborhoods grew near the plants, and largely because of language and cultural differences, new immigrants tended to settle where groups of their countrymen were most concentrated, a tendency resulting in the rise of distinctly ethnic neighborhoods within neighborhoods.

Within those neighborhoods and along the streets of downtown Wheeling, retailers including corner grocery stores, local saloons, restaurants (like Coleman's Fish, Louis Hot Dog, and Elby's Big Boy), and department stores (like Cooley Bentz and Stone & Thomas) thrived. Wheeling artists (like photographer George Kossuth, opera singer Eleanor Steber), athletes (Wheeling Stogies baseball and Wheeling Ironmen football club), and theaters (Virginia and Capitol) entertained. All of these combined to give

the town its own distinctive, and still revered, pop cultural identity.

So, due largely to its manufacturing success, Wheeling grew into a booming small city. But, for a multitude of reasons exhaustively explored since, the boom would turn to bust. Most of the large manufacturers and retailers would eventually shut their doors. Like many industrial cities, Wheeling continues to work to reinvent itself. But the things — the “objects” — we once made, continue to fuel our pride and (sometimes overwhelming) sense of nostalgia.

Of course, due to regency and the aforementioned colossal productivity, more of those objects still exist than from any other era. As one might expect, therefore, this era dominates our list in terms of the sheer number of objects.

In addition to being editor of the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review, Séan Duffy is Adult Programming Director and Local History Specialist at the Ohio County Public Library and the Executive Director of the Wheeling Academy of Law and Science (WALS) Foundation. He has a JD from the American University and has written several books and articles about Wheeling's history.

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Object 29: The Sweeney Punch Bow, 1844



Sweeney and Co. Glass Works opened in 1835. Thomas Sweeney designed his famous punch bowl in 1844. It is reputed to be the largest pieces of cut glass ever produced (5 feet tall; held 16 gallons; weighed 250 pounds). This sample appeared on Michael Sweeney's grave at Greenwood Cemetery when he died in 1875. In 1949 it was moved to Oglebay and is now in the park's glass museum.

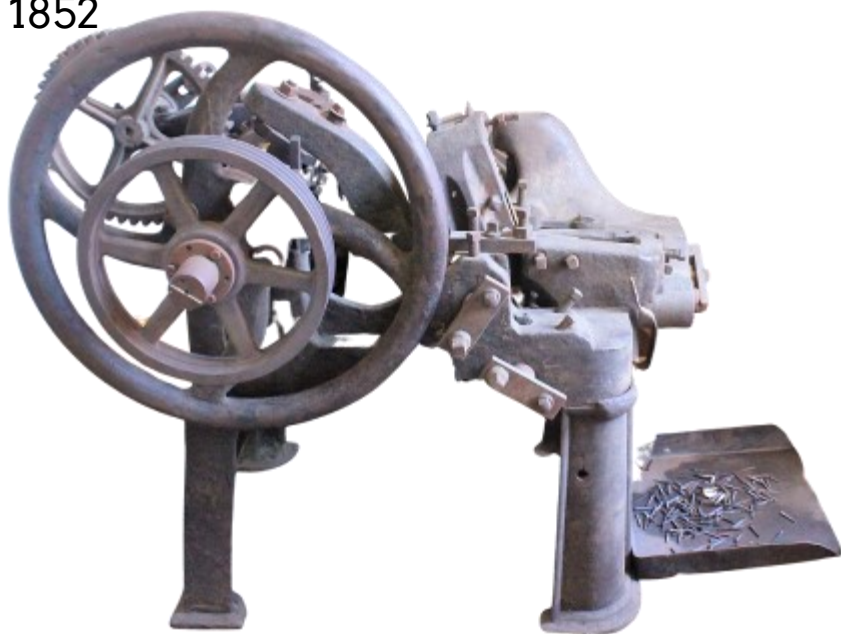


Read more:



Courtesy Museums of Oglebay Institute.

Object 30: La Belle Cut Nail Machine, 1852



La Belle Iron Works opened in 1852, making “cut nails” using machines like this one. Flat metal strips are fed into the machine and cut to the desired shape. Wheeling became known as the “Nail City,” due to its dominance of the cut nail market. In 1920, La Belle became part of the Wheeling Steel Corporation. The nail plant closed in 2010.



Read more:



Location: West Virginia Independence Hall.

Object 31: Hobbs, Brockunier & Company Glass Chandelier, 1882.



Hobbs was famous for its
"Wheeling peachblow,"
like this sample at the
Oglebay Glass Museum.

Opened in 1845,
Wheeling's Hobbs
Brockunier grew into
one of the largest and
most important glass
houses in the country.

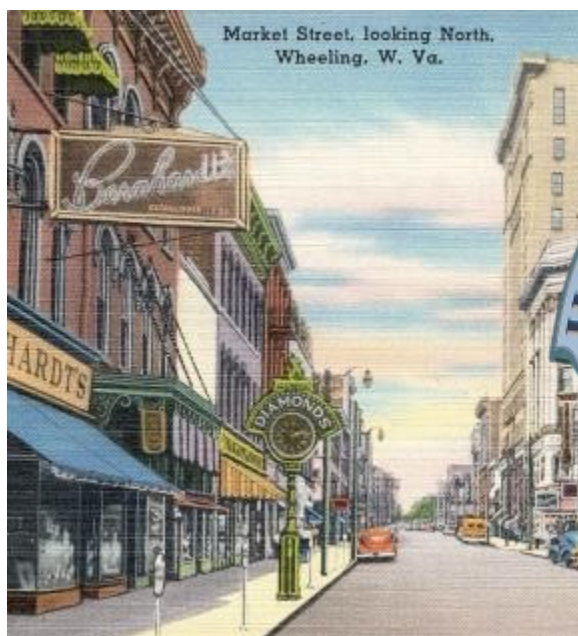


Read more:



Location: West Virginia Independence Hall. Formerly at Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy.

Object 32: The Hancher Clock, 1880s



Manufactured by Boston's E. Howard & Co. in the late 1880s, this two-sided street clock was installed in front of Hancher Diamonds (jewelry store) on Market Street, where it would become a Wheeling icon. It is weight driven and must be hand-wound every 5 days. Wheeling's Glenn White has maintained it for many years.

Read more:



Location: Southwest corner of 14th and Main Streets, downtown Wheeling.



Object 33: Arion German Singing Society Drinking Horn, 1891



Read more:

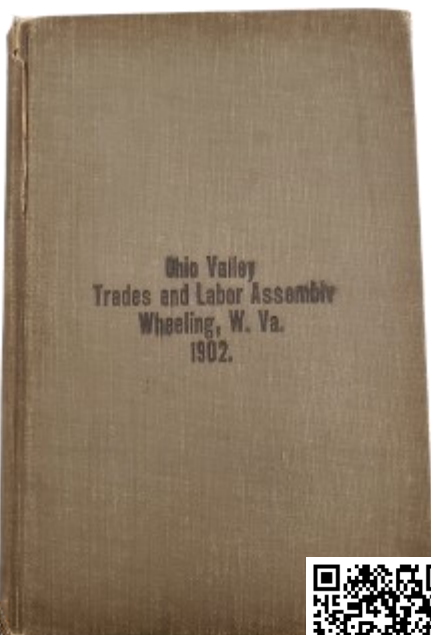


Wheeling was once a robust German town, and home to many German singing societies, including the Arion, Beethoven, and Mozart. These societies sponsored three big regional singing festivals, or Saengerfests in Wheeling in 1860, 1885, and 1906. The Arion operated Arion Hall at 20th and Main Streets; the working class Beethoven survived until 1961; and the working class, Mozart (supported by Henry Schmulbach and his brewery employees), operated Mozart Park (and beer garden). This dramatic drinking horn was created by the Arion Society. Location: OCPL Archives.

Object 34: Tobacco Workers International Union Badge, ca. 1902



Wheeling has always been a hard-working and defiant city. Nothing epitomizes that spirit more colorfully than Wheeling's labor history. By the turn of the 20th century, Wheeling was home to an array of labor unions representing every trade and profession from butchers to horseshoers. Most of these organizations were represented in West Virginia's largest central labor union, the (still extant) Ohio Valley Trades and Labor Assembly, membership of which was comprised of 4,000 Wheeling workers from 40 different unions.



Read more:



Location: Reuther Wheeling Archive, WALs Foundation

Object 35: Flaccus Bros. USS Wheeling Mustard Jar, 1896



Two icons in one jar! Located on 17th Street next to the current OCPL, Flaccus Bros. was the Heinz of Wheeling. They made condiments. They also had made fancy jars like the one above: a mustard jar shaped like the USS Wheeling (above), a 990-ton Naval gunboat built in 1896 and named for our city. She served in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine-American War, the Boxer Rebellion, and World War I. She was decommissioned in 1946.

Location: OCPL Archives.



Object 36: J. L. Stifel & Sons Calico Works Boot, 1914



In North Wheeling, J. L. Stifel & Sons Calico Works grew into one of the nation's largest calico printing establishments, producing indigo-dyed prints with a distinctive Stifel blue color. The Stifel boot became internationally famous.



Location: Private Collection of Joan Stamp.

Object 37: Benwood Mine Disaster Fob, 1924.



On April 28, 1924, an explosion at the coal mine operated by the Wheeling Steel & Iron Corporation in Benwood took the lives of 119 men, most of them recent immigrants, and many from Wheeling. There were no survivors. It remains the third worst mining disaster in the history of West Virginia. Commemorative fobs like this one were issued by Wheeling Steel to the rescue workers who attempted to find survivors of the mine explosion.

Read more:



Location: Private Collection of Sean Duffy.

Object 38: Reymann Beer Sign and



This artifact, owned by collector and educator Ryan Stanton, has to be one of the rarest and coolest around. You can't seriously discuss Wheeling's cultural or business history without talking about beer brewing and the dramatic rivalry between the town's two biggest brewers: Anton Reymann and Henry Schmulbach. So for this "object," we have to make an exception and include both.

Schmulbach Bottle & Cap, 1890-1914



Read more:



Location: OCPL Archives.



Object 39: Marsh Wheeling Stogies Sign, 1930s.



How many motorists have wheeled past this famous Wheeling sign since it went up in the 1930s—hundreds of thousands, maybe millions? Other than our bridge, this might well be the most seen Wheeling landmark.

Location: 900 Block of Main Street, Wheeling.

Read more:



& Marsh Wheeling Stogie Box, 1950s.

Read more:



If you had to pick just one...Founder Mifflin Marsh himself credited a Wheeling "genius" for inventing the "stogie," named for its most reliable of customers: Conestoga wagon drivers. Marsh started selling his hand-rolled stogies to crews and captains on Ohio River steamboats in 1840. The cigars have reportedly been smoked by President Lincoln, Senator Henry Clay, P. T. Barnum, John Wayne, Annie Oakley, and Mark Twain. Marsh boxes like the one above have appeared in several movies including *Jaws*, *Missing*, *Fool's Parade*, *How the West Was Won*, and *The Green Mile* as well as the TV series *Mad Men*. OCPL Archives.

Object 40: Wheeling's 20th Man Speech by Harry H. Jones, 1936.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HARRY H. JONES OVER RADIO STATION
W W V A, WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA, ON PROGRAM OF RACE
RELATIONS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1936 - TIME 7 MINUTES.

"WHEELING'S TWENTIETH MAN."

Ladies and Gentlemen:

About one out of every twenty persons living in Wheeling is of African descent. This twentieth man is not a new comer nor an alien, for his ancestors were settled by force in Virginia one year before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Nationally, our colored population knows but one country - The United States; it swears allegiance to but one flag - the stars and stripes; it acknowledges but one capitol - Washington.

A brief survey of our local colored population shows: that the group has six churches of three denominations; that it owns real estate worth about \$500,000; that it manages one fraternal corporation worth nearly \$120,000; one drug store, one tailor shop, two restaurants, two billiard parlors, and two beauty shops. In the professions, business, trades and personal service, the group is represented by: four physicians; two dentists; twelve clergymen; one lawyer; twenty two school teachers; one chiropodist; two undertakers; two social workers; three tailors; beauty parlor operators; two master hat cleaners, number employed as cooks, maids, waiters, messengers, bootblacks, janitors, elevator operators, chauffeurs.

This 1936 speech, delivered on WWVA Radio by Harry H. Jones, Wheeling's only Black attorney at the time, describes the reality of Jim Crow Wheeling. See page 85.

OCPL Archives..

Read more:



Object 41: Capitol Theatre Statue, 1936



LIFE-SIZED STATUES MADE BY FAMOUS ITALIAN SCULPTOR FOR CAPITOL THEATRE

Two life-sized statues, radiating as much feminine charms as the famous Venus De Milo, have been made for the Capitol theatre by the celebrated Italian sculptor, Frank Vitor.

These statues will be placed in the organ grille above the two side boxes and illuminated by indirect lighting.

Received from Pittsburgh the last week the statues are part of wish remodeling and decorating which are making Wheeling a most beautiful theatre even more beautiful. The accompanying photo gives a front and side view of the statues.

The remodeling is now in its seventh week with a crew of Italian decorators still at work. No date has been announced for the opening.

However when the theatre does open it will give Wheeling people something in beauty as they have never seen here.

The Capitol ballroom remodeled with the theatre will open next Thursday with Austin Wylie and his nationally known orchestra.

ONE SHOT-KILLS 3 CROWS

Sulphur, Okla., -UP: If W. B. Jones isn't the best shot in Murray county he at least boasts one of the best records. He sat at the window of his home and with one shot killed three crows and also counted a fourth.



Anyone who has ever attended an event at Wheeling's historic Capitol Theatre (and that's a lot of people) knows this elegant lady and her twin. They were designed by Italian sculptor Frank Vitor and added to the theatre during a 1936 renovation.

Location: Capitol Theatre.

Read more:



Object 42: Slot Machine from Billy's Bar, 1940s

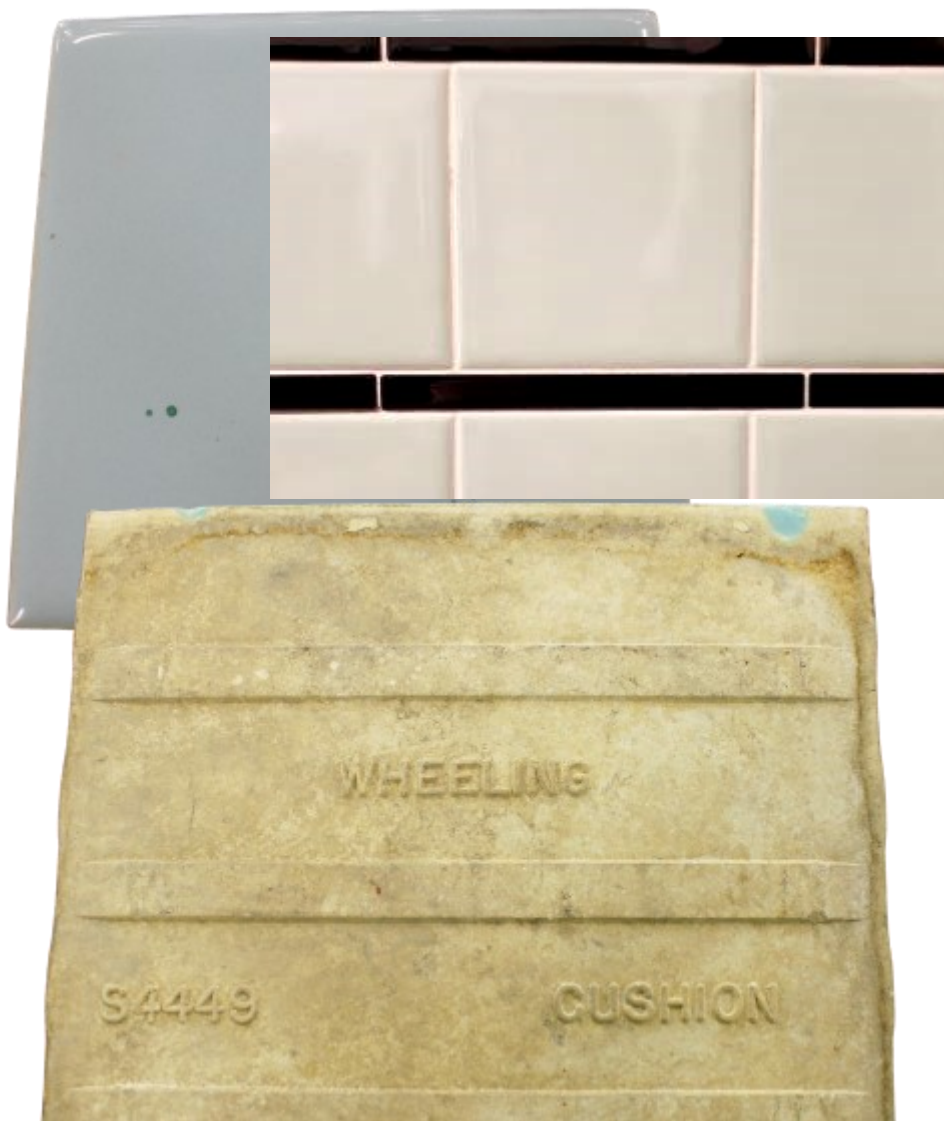


Read more:



Any attempt to define Wheeling through its objects has to include something related to the city's "WIDE OPEN" days and its most notorious crime boss, Big Bill Lias. Mr. Hugh Stobbs worked with his father for Lias when the latter owned Wheeling Downs during its golden age as a horse racing track. Mr. Stobbs donated this stylish one-armed bandit – a slot machine – from Billy's Restaurant-Bar in Centre Wheeling. Owned by Lias's "right hand man," Billy Heil, the bar was an institution, made all the more famous by the fact that Big Bill himself was a regular patron. Location: OCPL Archives.

Object 43: Wheeling Tile, 1940s



From its large South Wheeling factory, Wheeling Tile (1912) sent its familiar decorative wall and floor tiles to homes, pubs, and other structures all over the United States. The factory closed in 1962.

Location: OCPL Archives

Object 44: Eleanor Steber Portrait, 1940s



Created from a portrait of Wheeling-born opera star Eleanor Steber, this photograph was taken by famed photographer George Kossuth and most likely painted by his protégé, Eddie Martin. Remarkably, the portrait hung in Kossuth's former North Wheeling home and studio for decades before being rescued by OCPL Archives staff in 2015.



Object 45: Cooley-Bentz Santa Suit, 1950s



If you grew up in Wheeling, you know the real Santa Claus kept his office at Cooley-Bentz.
Location: OCPL Archives.

Read more:



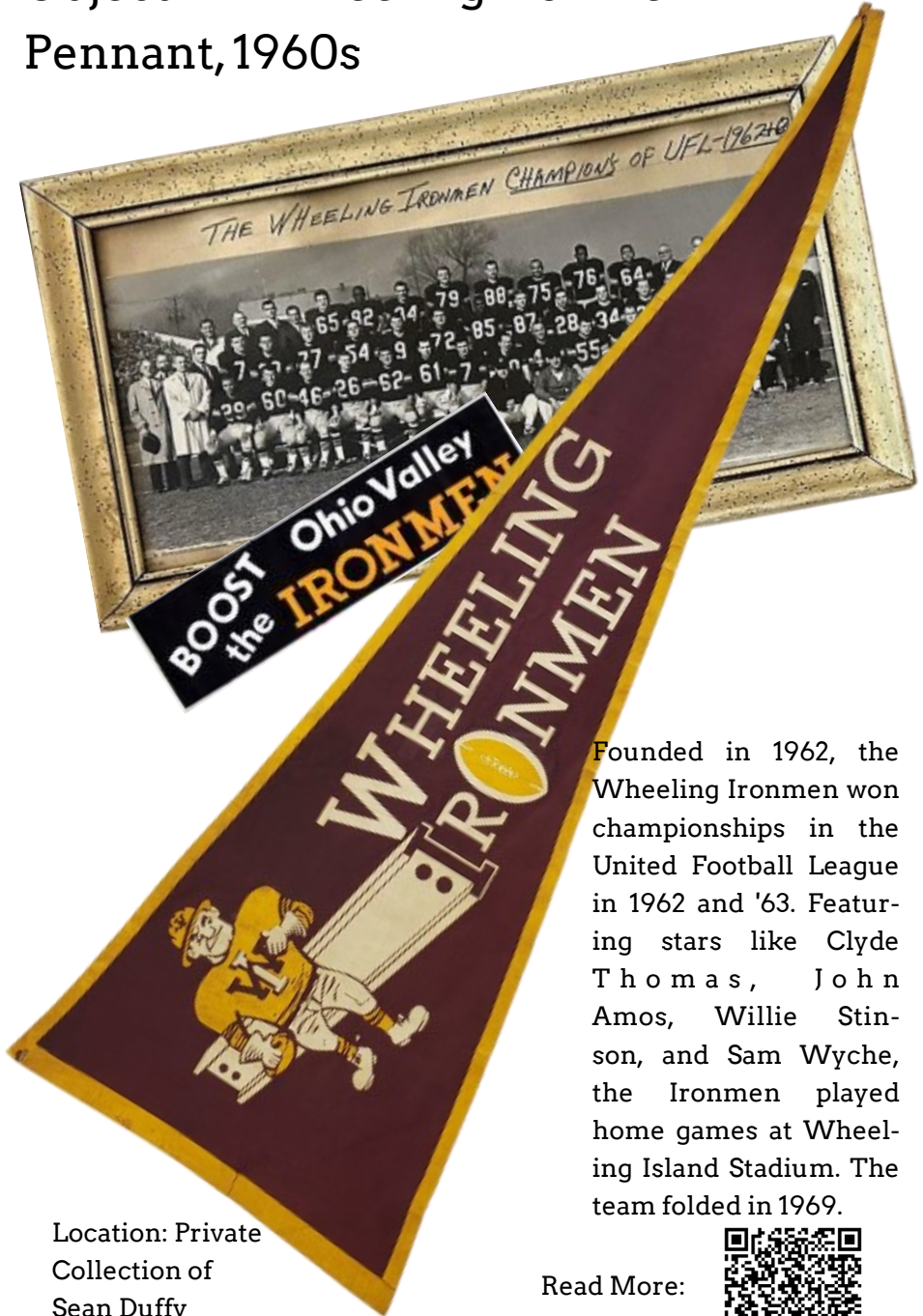
Object 46: "Elby" - The Big Boy, 1960s

Elby "The Big Boy" was first brought to Wheeling by the Bourys in 1956 on National Road, and soon became beloved for his burgers, bean soup, and strawberry pies. It is believed that this particular Big Boy stood outside the Centre Wheeling location. Now he lives in seclusion, and we respect his privacy.



Location: Undisclosed. Confidential.

Object 47: Wheeling Ironmen Pennant, 1960s



Founded in 1962, the Wheeling Ironmen won championships in the United Football League in 1962 and '63. Featuring stars like Clyde Thomas, John Amos, Willie Stinson, and Sam Wyche, the Ironmen played home games at Wheeling Island Stadium. The team folded in 1969.

Location: Private
Collection of
Sean Duffy

Read More:



Object 48: Wheeling Steel Trash Can, 1966



When you're looking for unique items made by Wheeling's biggest employer, Susan Haddad is the person to ask. And this green trash can comes with a great story. Susan owns a 1966 letter from TV talk show host Gypsy Rose Lee, thanking Wheeling steel for sending her "beautiful Wheeling garbage cans in time for our color show... Sears Roebuck won't even order them for us," she continued. "because Imogene Cocoa tried desperately— Phyllis Diller even offered her body." Popular cans, indeed.

Private Collection of Susan Haddad.

Object 49: The Flood Wall, 1979



Throughout their shared history, the Ohio River has overflowed its banks to inundate Wheeling more times than can be counted—well, almost. Wheeling Island has taken the brunt, and that's where this “flood wall” still stands. The original 1890 structure was home to a variety of stores and markets until Gene Long bought it in 1979 and recorded all the flood levels back to 1780, including “the big one” in 1936.

Location: Wheeling Island.

Object 50: Mail Pouch Tobacco Barn, 1980s



Once as ubiquitous as the Golden Arches, these barns painted by Harley Warrick advertised a Wheeling product across the nation. This one still stands near Barkcamp Lake in Ohio. It was Warrick's last.



Bloch factory at 49th and Water Streets, Wheeling.

Civic Empathy Through History Exhibit Now Officially Open



L to R: Bob Stakeley (Heinz History Center); Jimmie McCamic (OCPL Board Chair); Tom Dewolf (Coming to the Table); Glenn Elliott (Wheeling Mayor); Sean Duffy (OCPL Exhibits); Ron Scott (YWCA); Rosemary Ketchum (Wheeling City Council).

The Civic Empathy Through History (Wheeling's 20th Man) exhibit was officially opened on Sept. 27, 2022. As a member of the Heinz History Center Affiliates (HCAP) program, the Ohio County Public Library has the honor of representing our region by partnering with the Heinz History Center for the project, which brings together a network of 15 sites throughout our region that create engaging experiences to build empathy and serve as the foundation for civic engagement. A part of the Grable Foundation's Tomorrow Grants program, the project highlights stories and artifacts across Affiliate sites that show how people have taken action to make positive impacts on their communities.

The Library's featured artifact is a typewritten speech from the YWCA Blue Triangle Collection (see Object 40). On February 9, 1936, Harry H. Jones, Wheeling's only African American

attorney at the time, delivered a talk on WWVA. The speech centered on the conditions faced by Wheeling's African American citizens under "Jim Crow," a system designed to segregate Black and White citizens into separate communities. In a courageous challenge to the Wheeling community, Jones asked people to consider the inequality of Jim Crow, in terms of access to jobs, housing, recreation, and education. He appealed for empathy for the African American community and asked listeners to consider the legal and social changes needed to address these inequities.

Visitors to the exhibit are encouraged to do what they can to help through a "Call to Action." The Exhibit on the main floor of the Library will remain in place through March 2023.

Read more:



View the online exhibit:



Learn more
on WV Public
Broadcasting:





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ARCHIVING WHEELING



www.archivingwheeling.org

Archiving Wheeling is an online community designed to showcase the local and regional history collections of the Ohio County Public Library and its heritage partners. Contributor posts feature stories and images about the contents of each partner's archival and special collections, highlighting historic photographs, postcards and other images, books, journals, letters, maps, prints, pamphlets, brochures, advertising ephemera, and the like, that are related to the history of Wheeling or the Upper Ohio Valley region.



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UPPER OHIO VALLEY
HISTORICAL REVIEW

