

Letter from the Editor

For over sixty years *West Virginia History*, the state's major historical journal, was published by the West Virginia Department of Archives and History. Despite a lack of resources and no direct connection to academic research, Archives and History kept the journal alive. All West Virginians are indebted to them for this service. Following a year of negotiations led by WVU Press Director Patrick Conner and Dean Mary Ellen Mazey in July 2006, the journal was transferred to its new home in the Eberly College where it is now headquartered in the Department of History. It is my dream that the relocation of *West Virginia History* in the principal center for historical scholarship in West Virginia, and the state's only PhD program in history, will be instrumental in stimulating a resurgence of interest and new knowledge about West Virginia's past while continuing the venerable tradition established by Archives and History.

I will serve as editor and my colleague Ken Fones-Wolf as associate editor of the journal now renamed *West Virginia History: A Journal of Regional Studies*. Together we have assembled a diverse editorial advisory board composed of scholars uniquely qualified to assist us in broadening the journal's conceptual framework. *West Virginia History* will bring together research on the state's past from a variety of disciplines and perspectives. As the only state located entirely within the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of Appalachia, West Virginia offers an important window into many aspects of the region's past.

We hope that *West Virginia History* will integrate the state's historical experience into its comparative regional, national, and international contexts, and thereby encourage a more dynamic interpretive historical writing. For example, in the eighteenth century the

mountain counties of Virginia and western Pennsylvania constituted a contested borderland between competing European and Native American nations locked in a global war for empire. In the mid-nineteenth century West Virginia was born amidst the sectional and fratricidal conflict of the Civil War with the fate of the nation hanging in the balance. By the turn of the twentieth century, development of West Virginia's natural resources played a critical role in America's transition from a rural-agricultural society to an urban-industrial society. And by the close of the twentieth century, West Virginia was at the center of the "culture wars" which transformed the politics of regional identity within the larger political response to "globalization."

The new *West Virginia History* will appear twice a year beginning in 2007 with spring and fall issues. Each issue will contain several articles, an edited document, and book reviews. Each fall number will also provide a bibliography of new scholarship on West Virginia published in the preceding year, and periodically a section on new accessions by the WVU library's West Virginia and Regional History Collection. Eventually, we hope to include a section on new acquisitions at the West Virginia State Archives as well.

West Virginia History: A Journal of Regional Studies intends to stimulate new original research on the Mountain State by providing a timely refereed outlet for scholarship. It will also provide its readers with new perspectives on West Virginia's history and culture, and, therefore, play a strategic role in generating positive change. I am convinced that the journal will thrive in its new home, and continue its distinguished service to the people of West Virginia.

Ronald L. Lewis

Editor