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NEWS

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History showcase to feature state's birth, Civil War

by From staff reports

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The second annual West Virginia Archives and History showcase will start at 7 p.m. today at the Culture Center. A wide variety of items will be on display at the event, which will primarily focus on American Civil War and the events surrounding West Virginia's birth.

Rare books, manuscripts, old newspapers, Civil War medals and other Civil War documents will be on display at the showcase, said Joe Geiger, director of Archives and History with the West Virginia.

Civil War items that will be on display include Union Army regimental muster rolls as well as those from Union militia, said Terry Lowry, military historian with the state Archives and History division.

A muster roll is the list of soldiers' names drafted by Union forces when the men were enlisted or discharged from service. A small diary from an unknown individual living in the Kanawha Valley will also be on display.

The diary chronicles life in the Kanawha Valley between 1861-1862, Lowry said. The diary not only holds entries, but it also contains a small, hand-drawn map of the Battle of Scary Creek in Putnam County.

An extradition paper from a judge in Pennsylvania for Confederate General John McCausland dating back to 1865 will also be on hand. The extradition order was sent to West Virginia for the general because he was accused of burning Chambersburg, Pa. to the ground in 1864.

It was later proven that McCausland was acting on orders and he was exonerated.

Although the showcase will deal extensively with West Virginia's role in the Civil War and its move into statehood, a plethora of other displays and exhibits from various eras will also be on hand, Geiger said. A demonstration of preservation techniques will be given and videos and photographs will also be shown.

For example, a video of the John F. Kennedy presidential debate with Hubert Humphrey will be shown during the event, and exhibits dealing with the indictment of controversial union leader Bill Blizzard will also be on display.

Blizzard was charged with treason for his role in organizing the miners' march and the events surrounding the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921.

The showcase will wrap up around 9 p.m.

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