

### ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY FEBRUARY 29



The Opera House in Wheeling

**On February 29, 1888, the West Virginia Immigration Convention met at the Opera House in Wheeling.**

**CSO: SS.8.4, SS.8.24, SS.8.26**

**Investigate the Document: (Wheeling Daily Register, February 2, 1888)**

1. The form of immigration addressed in the article is not the traditional manner in which you think of people and families from one county to another; they are addressing 'immigration' in terms of attracting people to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Mr. Hart suggested that the proposed convention should be void of politics and centered on the attention of *what*?
3. How many individuals did Mr. Hart suggest should comprise the proposed committee?

**Think Critically:** What do you think is the purpose of the Chamber of Commerce, such as the one mentioned in the *Wheeling Register*? Does attracting people to West Virginia remain an important issue? How has the state attempted to attract visitors to the area? What major tourism industries exist within the state that appeals to outside visitors?

## Wheeling Register

WHEELING, W. VA., THURSDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 2 1888

### WEIGHTY AFFAIRS

DISCUSSED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

The Subscription to the Union Bridge Heartily Com-  
mended to the Voters of the County—A  
Convention of Business Men.

A special session of the Chamber of Commerce was convened at 7:30 o'clock last evening to express the sentiments of the body upon the Union Bridge and take whatever action might be deemed proper in the premises. In the absence of President Logan, who is ill, and of the Vice Presidents, Captain John McLure called those present to order, and moved that Colonel A. J. Sweeney take the Chair. The motion prevailed, and Mr. Sweeney, on taking his seat, said the meeting had been called for a special purpose, which would be explained by Captain McLure.

That gentleman said he had been largely instrumental in having the members called together. In view of the near approach of the election, and of the importance of the proposition pending, it had been deemed proper for the Chamber to ratify the action taken by it and other bodies in regard to the bridge, and express approval of the subscription sought to be made by Ohio county. As carrying out this idea, he submitted the following, which was read by the Secretary:

"WHEREAS, As the time is near approaching when the voters of the city of Wheeling and Ohio county will be called on to vote at an election to be held on next Saturday, February 4, for the adoption or rejection of an ordinance submitted by the Commissioners of said county, subscribing \$300,000 to the capital stock of the Wheeling and Harrisburg Railroad Company, for the purpose alone of the building of a Union bridge and terminals in the county of Ohio, we, as members of the Chamber of Commerce of the city of Wheeling, have read said ordinance and fully believe the interests of our county are well protected in the drafting of the same, which was done by special appointment of committees from the Chamber of Commerce, City Council and the Board of County Commissioners, and the ordinance being unanimously adopted by the County Commissioners, and now being submitted to a vote of our people for its approval, and as this Chamber believes in the great importance of this valuable work and improvements within our city and county, which will be of great value to every class of trade, labor and business of every kind in our city and county; therefore, be it

*"Resolved, That this Chamber of Commerce recommends to the voters of the city of Wheeling and Ohio county the adoption of said ordinance by voting for subscription on Saturday."*

The preamble and the accompanying resolution were unanimously adopted.

This done, Mr. N. B. Scott suggested that it would be proper to appoint a committee in each ward of the city to see that the full vote was got out on Saturday in favor of the proposition, and as carrying out his idea, he moved that such committees consist of two gentlemen from each ward.

Mayor Seabright seconded the motion, but while fully concurring in the aims and objects of Mr. Scott, he suggested that the committees were not large enough. In his opinion, they should consist of not less than five from each ward.

This suggestion was incorporated in Mr. Scott's motion, and the resolution was then adopted.

After a time the Chair, with the advice of several members, announced these working committees as follows:

First ward—A. C. Harrell, Dr. George I. Garrison, James McCahon, Joseph Hamilton and John Koch.

Second—C. R. Tracy, M. Horkheimer, Thomas E. Lewis, T. M. Garvin and A. C. Egarter.

Third—N. B. Scott, David Brooks, Isaiah Warren, Dr. George Baird and John Bodley.

Fourth—A. T. Young, John Boring, M. F. Geise, Richard Robertson and C. Hirsch.

Fifth—Charles Reed, Louis Delbrugge, C. H. Davis, F. H. Behrens and James Filan.

Sixth—W. H. Travis, E. W. Dunaway, A. D. Work, Will Irwin and John Weisgerber.

Seventh—Captain John McLure, J. S. Naylor, Geo. Hook, H. P. McGregor and C. H. Copp.

Eighth—S. Waterhouse, Jr., Patrick Daugherty, Geo. Bowers, Henry Schrebe and Phillip Koontz.

It was agreed to leave the country districts in charge of the resident members of the Board of Commissioners, with the urgent request that they see that suitable persons to get out the vote in the various precincts be appointed. The above committee are urged to be on hand at the opening of the polls in their respective wards on Saturday morning, and see that the full vote is got out. Upon their energy a great deal may depend, and they should put in the most earnest work.

### BUSINESS MEN TO MEET.

A State Convention of Merchants to be Held in This City.

When the special business which had called the Chamber together was disposed of, Mr. C. B. Hart took the floor, and said he felt that there had at last come a time when something might be done to attract outside capital and invite immigration to the State. It was true both people and money had been coming in of late years, but they had not been coming fast enough. If any other State or Territory had resources equaling those of West Virginia, in the same ratio as regards territory, they would sound a trumpet which would be heard around the world. We ought to do some blowing ourselves, in a legitimate way, and the present was a good time, in his estimation, to sound a preliminary blast.

Wheeling had a tremendous interest in the development of the State, an assertion which he proceeded to demonstrate in a very conclusive way, and then said the business men of the town ought to be, and he had no doubt would be, heartily in favor of the proposition, which he desired to presently submit. Before doing so, he called attention to the fact that very little money would be required. The chief expense, at least at the present time, would be securing the insertion of proper announcements of the objects of the gathering and the time and place of meeting, in the principal newspapers of the State. Once the representative business men of the State got together, ways and means would be speedily devised to bring about a material benefit to the entire commonwealth. He had not imagined, upon first thinking of the project, that parallel action was being taken elsewhere, but during the day he had found, in the Associated Press reports, the following, which he read:

"LITTLE ROCK, ARK., January 31.—A State convention, comprising 400 delegates, met here to-day to organize a State Bureau of Immigration, to continue in operation until the convening of the General Assembly, which body is petitioned to create such a State department. Fifty thousand dollars is to be raised to pay the expenses of the work by voluntary subscription from each county by pro-rata assessment. The railroads doing business in Arkansas were all represented by their chief officers, and they are the guests of the convention."

This was very much in the line of what he had in his mind, but his idea was more fully set forth in the following, which he desired to submit for the action of the Chamber:

WHEREAS, The considerable increase in new industrial enterprises in West Virginia, the building and serious projecting of additional railroads, the unsurpassed natural resources and cheapness of our lands furnish a substantial foundation for a systematic effort in the line of State development,

Resolved, That the Chamber of Commerce of the city of Wheeling unite and urge the business men, land owners and all interested in the welfare of the State to assemble in the hall of the Chamber on the 29th day of February and mature a plan to fur-

ther attract the attention of capital and of desirable immigrants to the unequalled advantages of West Virginia.

Speaking to his resolution, Mr. Hart said his idea was that the proposed convention ought to be held about the first of March. The sooner the matter was taken in hand the better. Continuing he said that representatives of all the railroad companies would be sure to attend, and alluded with satisfaction to the recent change of policy on the part of the B. & O. The gathering ought to be kept free from any suspicion of party politics, and should have but one object, the advancement of the material interests of the State. Something in this line ought to have been done long ago, but it was not too late to rectify the error. In conclusion he said that if it pleased the Chamber to adopt the pending proposition, he would offer a resolution providing for the appointment of a proper committee to carry out the idea.

After some discussion as to the proper time for holding the proposed meeting, the date of February 29 was fixed upon, and the resolution was adopted. Mr. Hart then moved that a committee of five be appointed to take hold of the matter and put it into shape, but at the suggestion of some of the members present the committee was increased to twelve. The following gentlemen were appointed upon it: Messrs. C. B. Hart, G. O. Smith, Thomas O'Brien, M. Reilly, Captain John McLure, Mayor C. W. Seabright, J. B. Taney, Joseph Speidel, Henry Baer, A. C. Egarter, C. H. Copp and John C. Riheldaffer.

This committee is called to meet at the Chamber of Commerce at 7 o'clock sharp, and it is hoped that every member will be present.