

AFHA AmeriCorps Recruitment is still underway

2014 / 2015 AFHA AmeriCorps program winds down



AFHA AmeriCorps members participate in a clean-up project August 7th in Elkins, WV.

The 2014 - 2015 AFHA AmeriCorps year is almost finished and we are grateful to the 38 members who served, a significant expansion of our programs. Of these, 35 are on track to complete their full term of 1,700 hours. Members provided individual service to a wide range of sub-sponsor sites doing conservation, cultural heritage and community development, and historic preservation projects. They also assisted with community service projects, in addition to their service at their sites. Read about the exciting stories of these members and their accomplishments in this and previous e-newsletters at www.afha.us.eneews/htm As these (mostly) young people complete their term and head out to new positions or to graduate school, we thank them for their service and wish them luck in future endeavors.



SITES



~ OF THE ~ MONTH

Experience the heritage of your area! *Sites of the Month* spotlights events and locations within the region, based on AFHA's four themes: forestry, history, culture, and nature.

FORESTRY SITE

[Swallow Falls State Park](#) in Allegheny County, Maryland borders the beautiful Youghiogheny River and offers among the most breathtaking views in the state. The park is home to the 53 ft.

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AFFA AmeriCorps Member Amara Pugens giving her final presentation during the last team meeting on August 7th in Elkins, WV. Photo by Scott Prouty.

Interpreting Arthurdale Heritage

By Jasmine Cunningham

AFHA AmeriCorps Heritage Team Member



in Maryland. The park's origins began with a donation of land from John and Robert Garrett of Baltimore in 1906 and famous visitors include Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. Both the River and Creek contain whitewater and other hazardous conditions, so caution should be exercised when visiting. Swallow Falls State Park also contains the oldest eastern hemlock and white pine groves in Maryland. The 37 acre virgin section has been designated as a sensitive management area with trees thought to be over 350 years old. The park hosts countless opportunities for hiking, biking, picnicking and camping.



The [North House Museum](#) of the Greenbrier Historical Society is in Lewisburg. The historical society has been in residence at the North House since

Like many AFHA sites, Arthurdale Heritage is a unique place that strives to preserve and share its history. As the first New Deal community started in the midst of the Great Depression, this community was built to assist struggling, unemployed coal miners and their families from Scotts Run, WV. These original families that moved to Arthurdale, called homesteaders, were provided with modern homes (with electricity and running water), two to five acres of land for farming, and training in various trades that could be used to bring in money for the family.



*Graduation class at Arthurdale, WV.
Courtesy Arthurdale Heritage.*

Just over 80 years after Arthurdale's beginning, a large majority of my service time is spent giving tours about the history and people of this community. Some of those who visit us are just passing through the area and looking for something to do, while others are professional historians who specifically sought us out for their personal research. To make the experience more accessible, we incorporate portions of oral history interviews that have been conducted over the years. Conveniently, my major project for AmeriCorps was to continue gathering these oral histories from

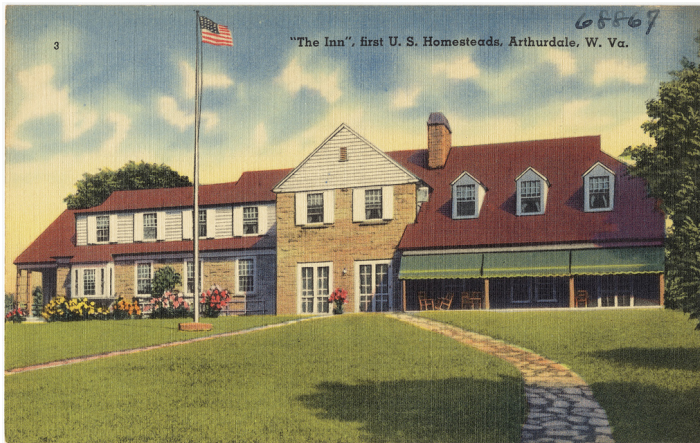
including the residence of the President of the Greenbrier College for Women, James Frazier's Star Tavern and Inn, and originally as the residence of lawyer John and Charlotte North when it was built in 1820. Today the museum includes artifacts on permanent exhibit that illustrate the story of the Greenbrier Valley. A current temporary exhibit that will be closing after August 2015 is "Invisible Roots and Legends: A Photographic View of African-American History in the Greenbrier Valley."



The [Purple Fiddle](#) has been hosting live music nearly every weekend (and more) in Tucker County for almost 15 years in a building that was previously the DePollo Store, built in 1915/16 as a place for miners to gather before

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Arthurdale residents made it easy for me to personalize each tour to the visitor's specific interests.



*The "Inn," first U.S. Homesteads, Arthurdale, WV.
Courtesy the Tichnor Brothers Collection, Boston Public Library.*

The most fulfilling occurrence from my major project was, without a doubt, the Arthurdale Schools Alumni Dinner. The event took place the night before the New Deal Festival, which is my site's largest event and similar to a family reunion for those who grew up here. The Alumni Dinner is a chance for the shrinking group of Arthurdale graduates to come together and reminisce about their younger years. This led to some humorous stories being shared (for example, I now know where all the boys went skinny-dipping) in addition to sentimental stories about marriages between original homesteading families. All of the stories that were shared helped to present Arthurdale in a way that is completely unlike textbook lessons on this piece of history, and I am happy to be a part of preserving these first-hand accounts.

music in West Virginia, it also serves food and drinks and has attracted national touring acts, with the schedule being booked six months in advance. There is lodging available in the form of the Purple Fiddler Hostel upstairs and the Fiddlers Roost Guesthouse next door. The Purple Fiddle is both a local gathering spot as well as a draw for visitors from far away including Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Washington, DC.



[Summersville Lake
Wildlife Management
Area](#) in Nicholas

County is the largest and cleanest freshwater lake in West Virginia and contains the second largest rock-fill dam in the Eastern U.S. It was dedicated in 1966 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, being constructed by the U.S.

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*Grade school children in a period of free activity at Arthurdale, WV.
Photo by Edwin Locke, courtesy Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division.*



*The co-op general store in Arthurdale, WV.
Courtesy FDR Presidential Library & Museum.*

flooding along the Kanawha and Gauley Rivers. There are hunting and fishing opportunities as well as picnic areas and hiking trails. In addition it is a great place for boating (featuring four boat ramps), scuba diving, snorkeling, and rock climbing (there are several sandstone cliffs along the 60 miles of shoreline). The Corps broke with the convention of naming the projects they built after the nearest town, which is this case was Gad, which would have resulted in the name, "Gad Dam." Summersville is the next closest town and so received the name.

Do you have a suggestion for *Sites of the Month*?

Email us at:

info@appalachianforest.us

and let us know your favorite sites throughout AFHA!

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*Weaving on one of the cooperative looms at Arthurdale, WV.
Photo by Edwin Locke, courtesy Library of Congress
Prints & Photographs Division*



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