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**West Virginia Archives and History
Primary Source Activity**

Inaugural Address of Arthur I. Boreman, June 20, 1863

Instructions: On June 20, 1863, Arthur I. Boreman became the first Governor of West Virginia. Below is an excerpt (a small part) of his inaugural address. Read the passage below and underline the important parts of his speech.

EXCERPT

. . . West Virginia should long since have had a separate State existence. The East has always looked upon that portion of the State west of the mountains, as a sort of outside appendage - a territory in a state of pupillage. The unfairness and inequality of legislation is manifest on every page of the statute book; they had an unjust majority in the Legislature by the original Constitution of the State, and have clung to it with the utmost tenacity ever since; they have collected heavy taxes from us, and have spent large sums in the construction of railroads and canals in the East, but have withheld appropriations from the West; they have refused to make any of the modern improvements by which trade and travel could be carried on from the one section to the other, thus treating us as strangers; our people could not get to the Capital of their State by any of the usual modes of traveling, without going through the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia. The East and the West have always been two peoples . . . Our people seldom visit the East for pleasure. The farmers do not take their stock, grain, wool and other agricultural products there to sell; the merchants do not go there to sell or buy; the manufacturers have no market there; indeed, we have had nothing to do with the Eastern people, except that our Senators and Delegates have gone to Richmond to sit in the Legislature and our Sheriffs have gone there to pay in the revenue as an annual tribute from this section of the State for the inequality and unfairness with which we have always been treated by them. Our markets, our trade and our travel are North and West of Virginia, through natural channels, or those constructed through the enterprise of our own people, or such means as they could procure. The mountains intervene between us, the rivers rise in the mountains and run towards the Northwest; and, as if to make the separation more complete, Eastern Virginia adopted the fatal doctrine of secession, while the West spurned and rejected it as false and dangerous in the extreme. Thus nature, our commerce, travel, habits, associations, and interests, all - all say that West Virginia should be severed from the East. And now, to-day after many long and weary years of insult and injustice, culminating on the part of the East, in an attempt to destroy the Government, we have the proud satisfaction of proclaiming to those around us that we are a separate State in the Union. . .

Inaugural Address of Arthur I. Boreman, June 20, 1863



Questions

1. What does Boreman say in the first sentence of this excerpt?
2. What does he mean by saying that the west had been treated "as a sort of outside appendage - a territory in a state of pupilage?"
3. What examples did Boreman use to show "unfairness and inequality?"
4. What examples did Boreman give to illustrate that the "East and West have always been two peoples?"
5. What gave Boreman "proud satisfaction?"

Answer Key

1. What does Boreman say in the first sentence of this excerpt?

He says that West Virginia should have been a state a long time before it was created.

2. What does he mean by saying that the west had been treated "as a sort of outside appendage - a territory in a state of pupilage?"

He is saying that the west part of Virginia had been treated like an unwanted addition and that they were less than equal to easterners.

3. What examples did Boreman use to show "unfairness and inequality?"

They held an unjust majority in the legislature, applied heavy taxes, withheld money from the west, and refused internal improvements.

4. What examples did Boreman give to illustrate that the "East and West have always been two peoples?"

He said "people seldom visit for pleasure;" farmers and merchants traded elsewhere, and that mountains intervened between them.

5. What gave Boreman "proud satisfaction?"

It gave him "proud satisfaction" to proclaim that West Virginia was a new state.