

## ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY DECEMBER 10



On December 10, 1938, West Virginia native Pearl S. Buck was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for her book *The Good Earth*.

**CSO: SS.8.9, SS.8.24, ELA.8.1, ELA.8.3**

**Investigate the Document: (Mutual Improvement Club of Ronceverte Collection Ms2011-097; *The Good Earth*, p. 143)**

1. Although no longer the sole American female to win the Nobel Prize for literature, Buck had the honor of being awarded *this* prestigious literary award during her illustrious career.
2. Pearl S. Buck was born in Hillsboro, West Virginia, located in *this* county named in honor for a famed daughter of the Powhatan Indian chief from Jamestown, Virginia.
3. What was the title of Buck's autobiography?

**Think Critically:** This excerpt from Chapter 15 of *The Good Earth* gives an account of one of the villagers who knows of the looting of Wang Lung's (protagonist) house. Wang Lung has learned from his own experience that the desperate conditions of poverty and starvation can force even the most upright individual to compromise his moral belief in the interest of sheer survival, and as a result he no longer holds a grudge against Ching (neighbor of protagonist). What message do *YOU* think Pearl S. Buck was attempting to send to her audience? What impact do you feel Pearl S. Buck had on American literature? Do you consider Buck one of the most prominent West Virginians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

*Pearl S. Buck*

# TOUR

*November 5 - 19, 1970*



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*The Pearl S. Buck  
Birthplace Foundation, Inc.*

## *Pearl S. Buck*

Noted author and humanitarian Pearl S. Buck, a West Virginian of international fame, is the only American woman ever to be awarded "The Nobel Prize" for literature. She also received "The Pulitzer Prize" and has been given over two hundred other awards for her literary and humanitarian works. Miss Buck is recognized as the world's most widely-read and translated author. She has written over seventy books, innumerable magazine articles, plays, movie scripts and a number of books not yet published.

Miss Buck was born of missionary parents in "My Mother's House" at Hillsboro, W. Va. Her parents took her to China when she was four months old. She returned to her birthplace when nine years old and then again when she enrolled in Randolph-Macon College.

Recently published books written by Miss Buck are, "The Kennedy Women" and "Mandala." One of her best-known books is her autobiography, "My Several Worlds," which is the theme of her talks while on this tour. A critic said of this book, "Once in a generation a great personal story speaks urgently to our hearts. In this book Miss Buck writes with candor, perception and loving understanding of the people, events, experiences and places which have made up her exceptionally full life."

Miss Buck is currently engaged in aiding Amerasian children. She says, "I am giving my life to my work." She emphasized these words when in 1967 she gave her estate and most of her earnings to her own special project for half-American children living in Asian countries.

Proudly we present to you, Miss Buck, a great and gracious lady and an avowed West Virginian!"



"My Mother's House," now on The National Register for Historic Places in the U.S. Department of the Interior, was built in 1857 by Cornelis Johannes Stulting, great-grandfather of Pearl S. Buck. This home was modeled after the home which he and his family left in The Netherlands, when they came to America seeking religious liberty. The outer and inner construction of the house is made of brick molded and baked on the premises and then covered with wood siding.

Plans are now in progress for the development of a Cultural Center and the complete restoration of the house and grounds. This home is located at Hillsboro, Pocahontas County, along U. S. Route 219.

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hoes and mats to cover the roof until they could grow thatch again from the harvest.

Then in the evening he stood in the doorway of his house and looked across the land, his own land, lying loose and fresh from the winter's freezing, and ready for planting. It was full spring and in the shallow pool the frogs croaked drowsily. The bamboos at the corner of the house swayed slowly under a gentle night wind and through the twilight he could see dimly the fringe of trees at the border of the near field. They were peach trees, budded most delicately pink, and willow trees thrusting forth tender green leaves. And up from the quiescent, waiting land a faint mist rose, silver as moonlight, and clung about the tree trunks.

At first and for a long time it seemed to Wang Lung that he wished to see no human being but only to be alone on his land. He went to no houses of the village and when they came to him, those who were left of the winter's starving, he was surly with them.

"Which of you tore away my door and which of you have my rake and my hoe and which of you burned my roof in his oven?" Thus he bawled at them.

And they shook their heads, full of virtue; and this one said, "It was your uncle," and that one said, "Nay, with bandits and robbers roving over the land in these evil times of famine and war, how can it be said that this one or that stole anything? Hunger makes thief of any man."

Then Ching, his neighbor, came creeping forth from his house to see Wang Lung and he said,

"Through the winter a band of robbers lived in your