

**ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY
JANUARY 12**



On January 12, 1941, Doddridge County native Matthew Neely resigned from the United States Senate to become governor of West Virginia.

CSO: SS.8.4, SS.8.9, SS.8.25, ELA.8.7

Investigate the Document: (State Papers and Public Addresses of Matthew Mansfield Neely, Go 21. 1: 1941-1945)

1. What do you suppose “superlatives” are used for in a descriptive connotation?
2. In which county was Governor Neely born?
3. Although no longer the only West Virginian to have been elected four times to the U.S. Senate, Matthew Neely has the distinction of being the only West Virginian to hold *these* three offices.
4. Governor Neely’s term as governor coincided with World War II, thus making it impossible to ignore; he spoke with WCHS in June 1941 about the urgent need to manufacture aluminum. Why was there urgent need for aluminum for the war effort?
5. In Governor Neely’s press statement, “The Surrender of Italy,” he forecasts his opinions on the remainder of the war. In your opinion, how accurate was he? Describe his tone—cite words or phrases to support your description.

Think Critically: If you were the Governor of West Virginia during World War II, how would you have helped assist the war-effort? What West Virginia industries would be of great value to the war effort?

INTRODUCTION

By EDWARD KEATING*

It is difficult for me to write about Matthew Mansfield Neely, the author of the diversified state papers which follow this introduction, without using superlatives which, as an old newspaper man, I do not like. Members of my calling, in viewing public men, are inclined to lean toward the cynical side. But I can not be cynical about Mansfield Neely because of my personal knowledge of his constant devotion to the cause of the common people and his faithful humanitarian service to both the nation and his state. During his long official career, he has uniformly endeavored to obtain justice for the veterans, teachers, farmers, and the workers in the mines, on the railroads and in the factories. He has loyally and ably defended the rights of all legitimate business and of all honest men and women. He has learned from history that all classes—and not just the privileged few—must have their fair share of the good things of life if our cherished democracy is to survive and prosper.

Mansfield Neely—the twenty-first Governor of West Virginia and one of the most famous political figures his state has ever produced—was born on the ninth of November, 1874, in a log cabin in Doddridge County, West Virginia, near the village of Grove. He is the only native of Doddridge County who has ever been elected a Congressman or Governor or United States Senator. He is the only West Virginian who has ever

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Mr. Keating, formerly of Colorado, and Mr. Neely, as fellow members of Congress, became acquainted in 1913 in the national House of Representatives. Ever since the day of their first meeting, Keating and Neely have been devoted friends. During their contemporaneous Congressional service, they habitually fought shoulder to shoulder "to the last ditch" for all liberal measures and against all reactionary legislation.

Mr. Keating and "Labor" have been among Neely's most loyal and vigorous supporters in the many battles he has fought for the promotion of the general welfare and the protection of the rights of the common people of the nation.

been elected four times to the United States Senate. He is the only West Virginian who has ever held the three high offices of Congressman, United States Senator and Governor.

The place of his birth was remarkable for nothing but the number and height of its hills, the sterility and ruggedness of its soil and the integrity and industry of its people who were exceedingly meek but apparently without either expectation or hope of ever inheriting the earth.

At this point, I insert something I wrote about Senator Neely in the latter part of 1948 when, as a candidate for a fourth term in the Senate, he was waging what was probably the greatest battle of his colorful career. The story was entitled: "NEELY'S RISE TO FAME TYPICALLY AMERICAN; BORN ON FARM, TAUGHT SCHOOL FOR \$35 A MONTH, WORKED HIS WAY THROUGH COLLEGE." The article is as follows:

"I have discovered at least one of Matthew Mansfield Neely's secrets of success in life. I have known him intimately ever since he came to the House in nineteen hundred thirteen.

"What puzzled me most about him was his extraordinary knowledge of English and the easy matter-of-fact way he quoted the Scriptures and poetry of every variety. I could explain the Scripture part of it, because Neely's ancestors were Scotch-Irish and what the Scotch-Irish don't know about the Bible 'isn't in the book.'

"It was Neely's profound knowledge of poetry which long had me guessing. But, now I know the answer.

"Mansfield, as he is commonly called, is related on his mother's side to 'Bobby' Burns, the cotter king, who lived and died in Scotland, but is honored and loved in every land.

"COMES OF REVOLUTIONARY STOCK

"The Neelys came to New York before the Revolution. The Governor's great-great-grandfather, John Neely, Sr., and his great-grandfather, John Neely, Jr., were both soldiers in the Revolutionary War. The latter helped to build Fort Montgomery, and marched with 'Mad Anthony' Wayne when he stormed West Point, and otherwise greatly helped to win American independence.

RADIO ADDRESS ON ALUMINUM DRIVE

STATION WCHS, CHARLESTON

JULY 17, 1941

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Three months ago you generously responded to my radio appeal to aid the Women's Field Army in protecting the people against cancer—one of the most devastating afflictions known to the human race. At the request of your government, for the preservation and the protection of your boys and mine who may soon be called upon to defend our country against vast hosts of murderous invaders, I again appeal to you for your instant, enthusiastic and utmost aid.

The unlimited frightful war that is now drenching Europe and Asia and Africa with the blood of murdered women and children and men has proved that armies and countries without adequate airplane protection, when attacked by modern means, are as helpless as sheep on their way to slaughter. The best warplanes cannot be made without aluminum. This country can neither manufacture nor obtain from abroad enough of this indispensable metal to construct the airplanes immediately necessary for proper national defense. In order to supply the existing deficiency with which we are face to face, the government earnestly appeals to every patriot in the nation and the state to contribute to it at once every available aluminum pot, kettle, pan, skillet, cup, spoon or other utensil.

The sheriffs of the various counties and the mayors of the various cities of the state—all of whom are patriotically and diligently serving the government in this matter—will gladly inform you of the place where you should deliver your contribution of aluminum for national defense.

Fathers and mothers of the boys who are now in the training camps and fathers and mothers of all other boys who, in spite of all our efforts to live our lives in peace, may in a little while be forced to grapple with the most brutal, bloodthirsty military powers on earth, let me especially appeal to you to help make this undertaking a complete success by diligently helping to have every available scrap of aluminum in West Virginia donated to the country's defense as soon as possible after the drive for this precious metal begins next Monday morning—the twenty-first day of July.

West Virginians are famous for their lavish contributions to the cause of freedom. Let us increase the luster of their fame by placing West Virginia on the honor roll of the states in responding to the federal government's request for aluminum with which to perfect the nation's defense in order to preserve the blessings of liberty for ourselves, our children and our children's children forever.

Please make next Monday a red letter day by giving Uncle Sam enough aluminum to keep Hitler away.

THE SURRENDER OF ITALY

PRESS STATEMENT, SEPTEMBER 8, 1943

The news that Italy has surrendered is "as cold waters to a thirsty soul." This action marks the beginning of the end of the reign of terror, blood and atrocity that Hitler unleashed on the world when he infamously seized Austria in 1938, and began his barbarous campaign to conquer the world. To the allies the psychological effect of Italy's surrender will be more important than the cessation of her fighting upon fields of battle. As a result of her action, various other intimidated or conquered European countries may be expected to become openly and aggressively pro-ally. Even Argentina—the government of which is the stupidest in the world—will now probably see the light and align herself with the forces of civilization and decency. I venture the prediction that the European war will be over before the first day of next July, and that Japan will be conquered or annihilated within twelve months after Germany surrenders. Tonight the American people and their allies have more for which to praise the Lord than they ever had before. But they should not, for an instant, stop passing the ammunition until Hitler and Hirohito have been hanged as high as Haman, and their cutthroat minions have been subdued beyond the possibility that they or their posterity will ever again set the world on fire.

STATE EMPLOYEES URGED TO
CONSERVE GASOLINE AND RUBBER

Press Statement, September 30, 1943

To All (West Virginia) State Employees:

You have patriotically aided the nation's war effort by substantially reducing your consumption of gasoline and the "wear and tear" of your automobile tires. But, to my regret, it is my duty to urge you further to curtail the use of your passenger cars for governmental purposes. In this matter West Virginia is far from the attainment of the forty per cent reduction goal requested by federal authorities. In view of the constantly increasing demands of our armed forces for oil and rubber, it is now more important than it ever was before that the requested reduction be made without delay. It is still true, as stated in the Baruch report, that the late months of 1943 and the early months of 1944 will constitute this country's most critical period of the war so far as rubber is concerned.

In the circumstances, let me entreat you constantly to guard against the slightest unofficial or non-essential use of gasoline or rubber tires supplied you at the expense of the taxpayers solely for necessary