

Biographies of West Virginia statehood leaders were prepared by Marshall University Humanities Program graduate students enrolled in Dr. Billy Joe Peyton's Fall 2010 "Historical Studies" class at Marshall's South Charleston campus.

By Kelly L. Pruett

Robert Hagar

Robert Hagar (January 1, 1810-October 19, 1878), delegate from Boone County, was born on Sixmile Creek in Boone County, when it was yet a part of Kanawha and Cabell counties. Hagar's family was of German origin. According to tradition its founders resided for a time in bucks County, Pennsylvania, before moving about 1790 to present Giles County, Virginia. About 1807 three brothers, James, Michael, and Phillip, moved to present Boone County, West Virginia, where Robert, subject of this sketch, became one of the largest individual resident land owners in present West Virginia south of the Great Kanawha River. He was a Whig and a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. About 1831 he married Ruth Adkins, daughter of Joshua Adkins, of Boone County. She bore him eleven children, two of whom, Montgomery and Enoch A., served in the Federal army in the War of Secession.

A circuit rider of wide contacts, the Rev. Hagar was a power in an area predominately confederate. He opposed secession and though designated irregularly, accepted membership in the Convention to make a constitution for the "State of Kanawha." As a constitution maker his chief interest was in free public schools which he believed would in time enable the new State to "catch up" with civilization. From 1863 to 1869, except the 1865 session, he was continuously associated with the West Virginia legislature, first as a delegate (1863-1864), then senator (1866-

1867), again as a delegate (1868), and finally as doorkeeper of the Senate for its 1869 session. In 1869 he gave his lands to his children and moved to Kentucky, where he died and is buried on Middle Fork of Rockcastle Creek about four miles from Inez, Martin County.

Sources:

Data gathered by Sigfus Olafson of Madison, West Virginia, who had access to Robert Hagar's Family Bible and to the records of Boone County.

Ambler, Charles H., Francis Haney Atwood and William B. Mathews, editors, *Debates and Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of West Virginia (1861-1863)*, pp. 72-73, Huntington: Gentry Brothers Printers.