

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 Carolyn S. Quinlan

JOHN HALL was born April 1805 in Tyrone County, Ireland. His father, John Hall brought his family to America in 1807 and settled in Rockingham County, Virginia. Three years later the family moved to Mason County, [West] Virginia where young John Hall, Jr. would mature. Even though he never received a formal education, it did not stop him from learning. A self-educated man, his love of learning and self-discipline provided him with the education he needed to become successful. Later in his life, he was known as the wealthiest man in Mason County. As a young man he settled down and married Olivia Hogg, daughter of Thomas Hogg, who was well known within the community. Together they had ten children; seven who died either in infancy or very young. Their daughter, Mrs. Benjamin Redman was the only child to survive the father; the remaining two children, sons, served in the military. Major John Thomas Hall, a member of the Fourth Virginia Regiment, was killed in action at Beech Creek on August 6, 1862. Lore has it that his brother, Lieutenant Colonel James Robert Hall, of the Thirteenth Virginia Regiment, joined the army to avenge his brothers' death.

John Hall proved to have the ability and the tenacity to enter into the political arena. He became deputy sheriff of Mason County at the young age of eighteen and by twenty-one, he was sheriff. He became a well-known figure and often was the preferred candidate for important political offices. Serving only one term each; in 1844 he was

elected as a delegate to the Virginia General Assembly, and in 1851 elected as Senator to the General Assembly.

Lewis Wetzel, editor of the *Point Pleasant Register*, ran articles that were anti-Union; this action faced intense disapproval and on October 23, 1862, John Hall, wanting to suppress such publications, killed him.

Even though he was tried and convicted of manslaughter and his political career ended, he maintained a position of respect and honor in his community of Mason County. He became a member of the Presbyterian Church where he served as elder. He died on April 30, 1881 and is buried beside his wife, Olivia, in the James Hogg Cemetery at a place known as Pleasant Flats, near Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

Sources: Atkinson, George Wesley and Alvaro F. Gibbens, *Prominent Men of West Virginia*, Wheeling: W. L. Callin, 1890.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=vLYUAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=prominent+men+of+wv&source=bl&ots=9mO46TGFfl&sig=d3B9o7HLgIMG2tPSb9a87-#v=snippet&q=hall&f=false>.

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