

DEC. 15-21, 1861

A leading emancipationist who argued against slavery on economic, social and political grounds died on Dec. 17, 1861.

Unlike some others of his time who opposed slavery on moral grounds, former Washington College President Henry Ruffner, though himself a slave owner, wanted to end slavery in Virginia to provide more paying jobs for white workers.

His most famous work, *Address to the People of West Virginia,* written in 1847, argues that the institution of slavery provided eastern Virginians with an unwarranted political advantage through the Three-Fifths law and limited the state's economy by restricting free labor. Ruffner claimed that free labor in Pennsylvania allowed Pittsburgh to grow

at a much faster pace than Wheeling. His work also claimed that



western Virginia should separate from the eastern half of the state if necessary to end slavery and expand its industrial and mineral economy.

Ruffner's ideas gave men in favor of gradual emancipation additional reasons for including the abolishment of slavery in West Virginia's constitution.

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