

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 J. DAVIS was born, May 1, 1835 at Clarksburg, Harrison County, [West] Virginia. In 1871, he served as a member of the Convention to restore the State Government of Virginia. In 1864, with McClellan running for President, Davis served as Presidential Elector. In 1868 he was one of the delegates from West Virginia to attend the National Democratic Convention in New York. He was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates from Harrison County in 1869 and 1870. In the fall of 1870, he was elected as a Democrat to the Forty-second Congress against Republican, Nathan Goff, Jr.; and was re-elected, two years later, to the Forty-third Congress as an Independent, over Democratic nominee, Colonel Benjamin Wilson.

In 1884, he once again served as a Presidential Elector, but this time it was on the Cleveland ballot. He was influential in casting a vote in the Electoral College that allowed West Virginia to have a significant voice in the election results.

On March 3 1887, Governor Wilson appointed him as one of six directors of the Hospital for the Insane at Weston, West Virginia.

He was a member of the West Virginia Grand Lodge, Knights of Honor where he served as Grand Dictator. As a successful lawyer, and active member of the Presbyterian Church, he was well known in his community.

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=onepage&q=davis&f=false>.