

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 Andrew J. Wood

Henry Dering was born around 1811 in Morgantown, Virginia. He was the son of George Small and Nancy McNeely, who moved to Morgantown in 1787, where his father married his sons and daughters into the local social elite, allowing them to rise and become prominent members of Morgantown. Through this process Henry Dering was able to become a successful entrepreneur, specializing as a dry goods merchant. Sometime between 1830 and 1860, he married his wife Nancy, who may have gone by the name of Agnes. Of this marriage there were two sons: Stealey and Henry. At the age of 50, Henry was elected as a delegate to the Constitution Convention, where his main contribution was acting as the chairman of the committee that made a compromise between north and south West Virginia on the issue of internal improvements. He was a member of the Methodist church at the time of his death in July of 1868; there is some speculation that his death could have been attributed to financial problems.

Bibliography

Debates and Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of West Virginia (1861-1863)
Edited by Charles H. Ambler, Frances Haney Atwood, and William B. Mathews.
(Huntington: Gentry Brothers Printers, 1939) 68-69.

Year: 1860; Census Place: Morgantown, Monongalia, Virginia; Roll: M653_1364; Page: 11;
Image: 17; Family History Library Film: 805364.

