

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 Wesley A. Kuemmel

Abijah Dolly:

Abijah Dolly was one of the more colorful figures of the West Virginia statehood movement. Born in 1817 in present day Grant County, Dolly was sent to the Constitutional Convention by a vote that was influenced by the presence of Federal troops stationed in the area of New Creek (now Keyser). Before the Civil War, he served as justice of the peace for Hardy County. (West Virginia, 28)

In addition to his service to the new state of West Virginia at the Constitutional Convention, Dolly was also responsible for the capture of British Major George Alfred Lawrence who was caught on Dolly's farm attempting to make his way to assist the Confederate Army.

The Dolly family settled in Western Virginia in the late 18th century. The family patriarch, John Dahle, was a Hessian mercenary who fought for the British during the American Revolution before moving to Pendleton County. The family name was anglicized to Dolly and the family was heavily involved in the early logging industry in

eastern West Virginia. The Dolly Sods Wilderness area takes its name from the Dolly family.

After the Civil War, Dolly served in the West Virginia legislature from 1864 to 1867 as a Delegate from Hardy County and Senator from the Tenth District. His financial dealings with the Federal government during the Civil War caused him to lose his property at Greenland Gap and he moved to a farm belonging to his wife's family where he died in 1894. He was buried at Knobley Cemetery in Martin, Grant County, West Virginia.(West Virginia. et al.)

West Virginia., et al. *Debates and Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of West Virginia*. 1 vols. Huntington,: W. Va., Gentry brothers, 1939. Print.

West Virginia. *Ordinances and Acts of the Restored Government of Virginia, Prior to the Formation of the State of West Virginia: With the Constitution and Laws of the State of West Virginia, to March 2d, 1866*. Wheeling, WV: John Frew, 1866. Print.