

Biographies of western delegates who attended the 1861 Virginia Secession Convention were transcribed by undergraduate students enrolled in Dr. Billy Joe Peyton's Fall 2010 "Introduction to Public History" class at West Virginia State University.

By Rob Hawkins

JOHN JAY JACKSON, of Wood County (now in West Virginia), was born near Parkersburg, Wood County, on February 13, 1800. He was the son of John George Jackson and Mary Payne Jackson, and he was a cousin of Thomas Jonathan Jackson, later famous as "Stonewall" Jackson. Jackson was educated at Washington (now Washington and Jefferson) College in Pennsylvania and at the United States Military Academy. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant of artillery and served at Norfolk, on the Florida boundary, and in Alabama. In 1823 he resigned his commission to study law, and was admitted to the bar that same year. He was married twice, first to Emma G. Beeson, and, after her death, to Jane Gardner. He was commonwealth's attorney of Wood County from 1826 until 1852. Jackson was also a member of the Parkersburg town council and mayor of Parkersburg. He was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates for five non-consecutive terms between 1825 and 1845.

He represented Wood County in the State Convention and was a member of the Committee on Federal Relations. Jackson was a Unionist, and he voted against secession on April 4 and again on April 17. Because of his Subsequent pro-Unionist activities, he was expelled from the Virginian Convention in June, 1861.

Although too old for active military service, Jackson supported the Union throughout the war. During the post-war years he was active in business affairs. He died on January 1, 1872, in Parkersburg.

Sources: PMWV, pp. 246-252; George W. Cullum, *Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy* (Boston and N. Y., 1891), I, 199; RGA, p. 391.