

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 Kelly L. Pruett

George Washington Sheets

George Washington Sheets (September 23, 1824-August 12, 1900), delegate from Hampshire County and a son of Michael Sheets, was born at Charles Town, (West) Virginia. With only six months schooling he became a mechanic and helped to build the bridges of the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad between Piedmont and Cumberland. Under commission from Governor Pierpont, he was active in recruiting militia for the defense of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. He was a delegate from Hampshire County in the first West Virginia Legislature and, after his removal to Westernport, Maryland, he was for twenty years a justice of the peace in that state. In politics he was a Democrat.

September 23, 1847, George W. Sheets married Eleanor Matilda Beales, to which union were born ten children: John, March 21, 1848; Anna Conrad, March 9, 1850; George David, August 2, 1852; Clara Virginia, January 8, 1855; Margaret Matilda, October 8, 1857; Samuel Davis, February 28, 1860; Mary Elizabeth, June 5, 1862; Charles Sheridan, September 30, 1864; Cornelius Slack, July 28, 1867; and Edgar, May 7, 1870. Although he attended the Presbyterian Church and was for years a superintendent of a Sunday school in Piedmont, West Virginia, George W. Sheets was not a member of any church. He belonged to the Philos Lodge No. 91, I.O.O.F., of Westernport, Maryland, and is buried in Philos Cemetery in Westernport.

Sources:

Sheets Family Records; Convention, *Journal*.

Ambler, Charles H., Francis Haney Atwood and William B. Mathews, editors, *Debates and Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of West Virginia (1861-1863)*, p. 90, Huntington: Gentry Brothers Printers.