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

Thomas Asbury Roberts:

T.A. Roberts was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1808 and died in Roane County, West Virginia in 1888. The Roberts family left Baltimore for Ohio while Thomas was still a boy and he grew up in the area of Zanesville. In 1842, Roberts was appointed Colonel of the First Cavalry Regiment, Ohio Militia. In 1844, Roberts came to Roane County to act as a land agent and began purchasing tracts of property for himself. After the death of his wife, Roberts remained in Roane County and served at various times as schoolteacher. (Bishop)

Roberts was appointed to represent Roane County at the Second Wheeling Convention and cast his vote for the formation of a new state at great personal risk, as Roane County was sympathetic to the Southern cause. His worries were not groundless; upon his return from Wheeling, Roberts was lured into a trap and arrested by Confederate forces on the charges of treason to the Commonwealth of Virginia and to the Confederacy. He was placed in shackles and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond where he remained until his eventual exchange in November 1861. Upon his release, Roberts began raising troops for the Federal cause in Roane County, and served as adjutant for the 11th West Virginia Infantry. (Bishop)

Little is known about his life after the Civil War, but he remained a trusted member of the

public, acting as commissioner for estates in the Roane area. Roberts died in 1888 and

was buried at Reedy, Roane County, West Virginia. (Stewart)

Bishop, William H. *History of Roane County, West Virginia, from the Time of Its Exploration to A.D. 1927*. Spencer, W. Va.,: W.H. Bishop, 1927. Print.

Stewart, Ron. "Col Thomas Asbury Roberts". 2009. *Find A Grave*. 11/11/10 2010. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=roberts&GSfn=thomas&GSmn=asbury&GSbyrel=in&GSdyrel=in&GSob=n&GRid=32680300&df=all&>.