

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

Josiah Simmons:

Josiah Simmons was born on March 15, 1814 and died on April 20, 1885. A native of Fairfax County, Simmons came west to Randolph County at about age 40, buying 500 acres near Elkins. Simmons was a devout Baptist and donated a parcel of land for the construction of a Church of the Brethren near Kerens.

In addition to farming, Simmons was also engaged in retail trading and was an evangelist. While representing Randolph County at the First Constitutional Convention, Simmons often opened sessions by leading the assembly in prayer. Following the Civil War, Simmons sold his land in West Virginia and relocated to Salem, Virginia, where he died and was buried at East Hill Cemetery. (West Virginia. et al., 90-91)

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