THE RENDING OF
VIRGINIA

A History

Granville Davisson Hall

With a New Introduction
by John Edmund Stealey III

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Foreword

Granville Davisson Hall’s passionately pro-Union account of the development of the state of West Virginia during the Civil War has long been out of print. Other modern studies by scholars like Otis Rice and John Alexander Williams have corrected the political exaggerations and inaccuracies in Hall’s highly partisan and sometimes polemic account of the historic differences between western and eastern Virginia—economic, social, and political bases of much earlier sectional antagonism—and have also better addressed the complex constitutional issues involved in the formation of a separate state out of an existing state without its consent under the Lincoln administration. What remains in Hall’s history of particular interest to social historians are his analysis and description of the various interactions of the numerous political personalities involved in this separation. This wealth of detail, and recapitulation of what individual actors in the political drama thought was happening, provides precisely the grist for the mill of American social historians interested in delineating attitudes and values underpinning the larger political reality of change.

As Ronald L. Lewis points out in his excellent new monograph, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880–1920*, the roots of western Virginia’s movement for separate statehood lie deep in the nineteenth century: lack of internal improvements
and state support for railroads and canals, a tax system which discouraged free enterprise, inadequate political representation based on free population, and a land system which retarded settlement. Men like Granville D. Hall saw themselves as liberal progressives, seeking to throw off the feudal shackles of Virginia's antebellum social system with its rigid class system dominated by a decadent slaveholding aristocracy.

Hall's ultimate identification of success in forming the separate state of West Virginia with the opening of unparalleled new economic opportunities is best expressed in his own words:

The dream of generations had "come true." Some whose hopes and labors had been crowned were not here to enjoy the fruition. At last we had come to the end of the toilsome road; the close of the fierce, the bitter, the enduring struggle; had triumphed over perils by land and sea, by flood and field—the assaults of open, the snares of secret foes—the timidity of the faint-hearted, the rashness of the bold. At last we were out of the wilderness; not only in sight but in possession of the promised land. The past, with its anxieties and bitterness, was to be forgotten save for its lessons of wisdom and patience; and now all faces turned to the future, rosy in the dawn of enfranchisement and progress!

I think to a modern reader of Hall's history, the predominating economic aspirations of all these statehood leaders who were Hall's friends and associates will strike an ironic chord in light of West Virginia's subsequent development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rapid exploitation of the state's timber and mineral wealth by outside capitalists would indeed lead to rapid modernization, but a modernization which ultimately left much of the state in poverty and despair. Nevertheless, Hall is representative of many capitalists within Appalachia who saw the rapid construction of railroads and industries of any type as essential to a progressive and prosperous future for the region.
John E. Stealey has provided insightful contextualization of Hall's place and time in West Virginia's evolution as a separate state. Noting Hall's amazing short-hand recording of all events and proceedings of West Virginia's first constitutional convention, Stealey also places him politically and ideologically within the broader social construction from which so much dissent originated in these western Virginia counties. Stealey also illuminates the historiographical benefits to later scholars of Hall's intense partisanship, noting the importance of individual and family personality in dissecting regional politics. The fact that Hall knew so many leading politicians personally, for example, allowed him to offer telling corrections to their own often self-serving accounts long after the Civil War.

In 1873, Hall sold his interest in the Wheeling Daily Intelligencer and left the state, eventually moving from Pittsburgh to Chicago as secretary to the general manager of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Haunted by his former home like so many other Appalachian migrants, however, his mind remained focused on West Virginia, where he had been a privileged eyewitness to so many critical moments in the state's political history before and after the Civil War. This resulting book, one of many fictional and historical accounts of his West Virginia home, should consequently have great appeal to both general readers and scholars of Appalachia and the Civil War.

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Introduction

No state lost more than the Commonwealth of Virginia as a result of the American Civil War. No greater failure in statecraft in the history of the United States exists than the Old Dominion’s dramatic loss of approximately one-third of its domain while it futilely attempted the act of secession. Since the American Revolution, many Virginia leaders continually professed a rigorous adherence to democratic and republican principles, but these professions were starkly revealed as false by their public and constitutional treatment of their fellow citizens and by their maintenance of the institution of slavery at all costs. These insidious contradictions ultimately caused their Commonwealth’s rupture. While the majority of public men in antebellum Virginia never qualified for the extreme Fire-eaters’ camp, the result of their positions was the same as if they had because of the fateful march of events in the secession crisis.

In a state that has experienced a rather troubled history, arising in some measure from the political pathologies engendered by its creation, West Virginia’s most glorious epoch was its statehood era. Most of its citizens remained loyal to the United States in the most trying time of national existence, and many paid the ultimate sacrifice for preservation of the Union. No one expressed the rallying cry in behalf of national patriotism in western Virginia better or more eloquently than Archibald W. Campbell, editor of the Wheeling Daily Intelligencer, when he responded to
news of the Virginia Convention’s passage of an ordinance of secession. Urging resistance and denouncing the act as an “infamy” and a “mockery” of the peoples’ wishes, Campbell proclaimed the state in revolution. Only the national government with regional help could save western Virginians. Otherwise, the west would be “delivered over to the despoilers and traitors, who in their wild fury are turning the eastern part of our State into a vast field of anarchy.” Advising “Union men of the Northwest” to cast away partisan politics and to enroll in Union organizations, Campbell gloriously enjoined, “Summon every energy of your mind and heart and strength, and let the traitors who desecrate our borders see, and let history in all time record it, that there was one green spot—one Swiss canton—one Scottish highland—one county of Kent—one province of Vendée, where unyielding patriotism rallied, and gathered, and stood, and won a noble triumph.”

No one can take seriously modern apologists or cynics who might assert that Virginians did not care what occurred in their west during the period. Contemporary military actions directed by Governor John Letcher and his generals—Harper, Garnett, Lee, Jackson, Wise, and others—belie the assertion. The symbolism of Virginia’s great seal and its motto was real to many western Virginians. Granville Davisson Hall undoubtedly gained deep ironic satisfaction in placing the seal depicting the vanquished tyrant and the motto, “Sic Semper Tyrannis,” on his book’s title page. Hall and other antebellum westerners believed that eastern Virginians had become the despots.

Granville Davisson Hall’s chronicle of the separation of the Virginias is a knowledgeable view by a witness to the events. Because of Hall’s strategic position in Wheeling as a reporter and observer in the various conventions and assemblies that restored Virginia on a loyal basis and formed West Virginia, he was in the center of the maelstrom. His personal and some-
times intimate acquaintances and relationships with many players in the statehood movement enabled him to produce an insightful and unique narrative. As a result, *The Rending of Virginia: A History* remains an important source for understanding the critical events in Wheeling. Its interpretation is militantly partisan and has verve, making the resulting prose a refreshing and vigorous exposition of the loyal United States position in a contentious time.

Hall's volume enjoys a secure historiographic standing among the able participant justifications and explanations of the political, legal, and constitutional rationale of the statehood movement. Perhaps the best official explanation emanated from the West Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1862–63. Another semi-official version relating legal and constitutional events appeared in the first volume of the case reports of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. John Marshall Hagans, who served as the clerk of the highest state court, wrote "A Brief Sketch of the Erection and Formation of the State of West Virginia From the Territory of Virginia." Senator Waitman Thomas Willey addressed the same subject in a speech on 2 February 1863 to the recalled session of the West Virginia Constitutional Convention.

Descended from the original settlers that peopled the hills and valleys of northwestern Virginia, Granville Davison Hall was born on 7 September 1837 in a log cabin constructed in 1833 by his father on the Northwestern Turnpike, north of (New) Salem, (West) Virginia. His great-grandfather, John, had moved in the 1790s from Alexandria, Virginia, to a fertile farm on the east side of the West Fork (of the Monongahela) River, three miles downriver from Shinnston, east of the modern village of Enterprise, Harrison County. Granville's grandfather, John, the youngest of nine children, married Elizabeth Patton of Wellsburg, Brooke County, and moved to Urbana, Champaign County, Ohio, where
he had five children. Upon his wife’s death, John returned to the West Fork country and remarried a widow and had five additional children. Granville’s father, William Patton Hall, named for his mother’s brother, was born in Ohio. He married Falisima Davis, a second-generation descendant of a Seventh Day Baptist who founded New Salem in 1790 on the headwaters of Tenmile Creek, a Harrison County tributary of the West Fork River, after moving from Shrewsbury, New Jersey. They had a son, Van Buren, three years before Granville’s birth.5

When Granville was four, the Halls moved down Tenmile Creek to Shinnston, located north of Clarksburg, the Harrison county seat, on the West Fork River. The Shinns, originally in the Society of Friends meeting, had founded the settlement in 1776 after migrating from New Jersey by way of Apple Pie Ridge, near Winchester, Virginia. The Halls would have a daughter, Adelia, five years after their arrival.6

Little is known about Granville Hall’s religious upbringing, but his residence near Salem and in Shinnston would indicate that he had intimate contact with religious leaders who held refined democratic and republican principles and who possessed anti-slavery beliefs in theological governance as well as in politics. The Shinns who ministered the first church in their town had left the Friends’ Meeting in the west and had become Methodists. They were among the originators of the schism in the Methodist-Episcopal denomination that created the Methodist Protestant Church. Reflecting the egalitarianism of the Jacksonian Era, the new church questioned the totalitarianism of bishops and favored the participation of ordinary clergy and laity in church governance. This religious undercurrent led to theological questions about the propriety of slavery among clergy, laity, and society as a whole. These egalitarian propensities easily transferred to the secular political arena. Also, the idea, experience, and knowledge
of religious schism and revolt became a germinating solution to political questions within states when these same people faced desperate alternatives.  

Hall matured in a community of petty tradesmen and artisans, all born in Virginia and with a diversity of skills. In 1850, Shinnston had approximately thirty residences, including an inn kept by Solomon Fleming, two stores, and various shops. It had a town constable, physician, no lawyers, and a Vermont artist staying at the inn. Granville’s father was the village tanner, who was preparing his eldest son for the same trade and who boarded another tanner to work with him. They lived beside the seventy-two-year-old Levi Shinn, the town’s only minister, who was a New Jersey native. All of the Hall siblings had been enrolled in a school within a year of the census. 

Young Hall lived in a slave-free community in a slave state. Like most western Virginia counties, Harrison had relatively few slaves. In 1850, it had 346 bondsmen, 161 males and 185 females. The slaves were the property of 89 male and female owners. No individual holdings were large, ranging from 1 to 12. Most slaves lived with the elite families of Clarksburg, the county seat. Not one identifiable resident of Shinnston owned a slave. 

Hall’s formal education was in the home and in the subscription school. The “one-story, weather-boarded, unadorned, unpainted” school building stood on exposed stone-pillars and also served the community as the only church building. Hall recalled having only three teachers, of whom only one was competent. He related his teachers’ personal characteristics and pedagogic approaches rather than his course of learning. 

The home was the major influence in the child’s intellectual development. Granville had access to books in the community, but more important was his family influence. His father was a man of “unusual intellectuality” who had as many books and
newspapers in his home as he could. The household subscribed regularly to the *National Intelligencer* and the *New York Tribune*. Also present in his house was a copy of Elias Longley’s *Phonetic Advocate* that attracted the teenager’s interest. It stimulated his determination to master phonography and sound hand, a system of shorthand writing based on sound. Isaac Pitman’s shorthand system especially challenged him. His mastery of the stenographic art would affect the entire course of his life.\(^{11}\)

Although the details of Hall’s boyhood experiences and the course of his intellectual development are vague, certain observations and inferences can be assumed about his political socialization. Because of the religious origins and the doctrines associated with many inhabitants, both Salem and Shinnston were somewhat exceptional even in the Harrison County context. Reminiscing with Hall in 1915, the octogenarian county historian, Henry Hammond, recalled that Harrison County had cast in 1860 twenty-two votes for Abraham Lincoln, of which twenty originated in Shinnston. He continued, “The inhabitants in and about Shinnston have always been distinguished for their robust independence of character and their freedom of opinions on all public questions.”\(^{12}\)

Hall’s society was primarily one of common, hardworking yeoman farmers, petty tradesmen, merchants, and artisans. Hall had contact with slavery, but not by family or neighborhood ownership. He knew people who would condemn the institution. Hall’s paternal great-uncle had freed slaves that he had inherited and was militantly opposed to the institution. His society contained people who held extreme democratic views in religious and secular governance and practice. These same people would celebrate a free labor ideology. His family’s periodical reading fostered a national, not parochial, outlook on state and national events. Hall’s teen interest in the Pittman system reflected a certain intellectual precociousness and individuality.\(^{13}\)
Granville's father greatly influenced his son's political views. The son's earliest political memories recalled the Whig celebration of 1840 and a still-born one in Shinnston in 1844. William P. Hall became a Whig when the party was formed, although earlier political leanings might be indicated by his eldest son's name. Like former President Martin Van Buren, Hall became a "Free Soiler when the anti-slavery tide began to rise." A defining incident occurred in the 1850s. Under the instructions of Judge Gideon Draper Camden, assisted by Prosecuting Attorney Benjamin Wilson, the grand jury of the Harrison County circuit court indicted Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, and his two county subscribers, William P. Hall and Ira Hart, as violating Virginia's prohibition against the distribution of incendiary newspapers. Wilson and Camden, who would later flee to Dixie when the war broke out, never pursued the matter.  

In February 1857 in his nineteenth year, Hall went to Fairmont, Virginia, to catch the first train that he had ever seen and traveled to Washington, D.C., to find a job as a shorthand reporter. He had just finished a term as a country school teacher in Harrison County to stake his venture. With letters of introduction, he arrived in the capital a few days before the inauguration of James Buchanan as president of the United States. He saw the ceremony and soon visited his congressman, John S. Carlile, who introduced Hall to Robert Sutton, a native of England. Sutton had charge of all reporters of proceedings and debates in Congress and readily hired Hall for his corps. Hall worked during the 1857–58 and 1858–59 congressional sessions. Between the sessions, Hall returned in the summer to keep books and work for his two half-uncles at Benton's Ferry, Virginia, on the Tygart River near Fairmont at their farm, store, post office, and ferry on the mainline of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. A severe attack of typhoid fever prevented the reporter from returning to the
1859–60 congressional session. Of all the national leaders that the young Hall met in his two years in the capital, he most admired William Henry Seward.¹⁵

Soon after recovering his health, Hall became involved with the western Virginians, centered mostly in the northern panhandle, who found the Republican Party appealing. These men—who had experienced discriminatory taxation, undemocratic representation, and many laws benefiting slave-holders—saw slaveholders and slavery as the cause of their political and economic suppression. Also, they lived near enough to Pennsylvania and Ohio to have witnessed the economic and political transformations that had eluded Virginia. The Republican Party in western Virginia had been formed in 1856 in a convention in Wheeling. Gaining strength in the late 1850s by immigration of New England families into the Ohio River section and by the Panic of 1857, western Virginia Republicans had tentatively secured the national Republican convention for 1860 until the John Brown Raid caused party leaders to shift the meeting to Chicago to avoid southern antagonism. Becoming active in party activities in 1859, Hall became an elector in Virginia for the Lincoln-Hamlin ticket.¹⁶

Hall's activity and stenographic skills attracted Archibald W. Campbell's notice. Campbell, an early Republican Party organizer, had helped transform the Wheeling Daily Intelligencer into the leading party organ in western Virginia. In 1859, he induced Hall to work a few months for the newspaper. In January 1861, the Republican editor contacted Hall urging him to clerk and keep the office books. Campbell intoned, "I would rather have you in the office and on the paper than anywhere else because I think that is your proper sphere—albeit you always modestly thought you had no special adaptation," but he warned that the paper was not "the NY Tribune or any other big paying sheet." Later in the
month, Campbell summarized the newspaper’s employees and their respective jobs and asked Hall to become his co-counselor and confidential assistant. He added that the organ circulated a thousand papers daily and fifteen hundred weekly and that he sought growth. The twenty-four-year old Republican stenographer found the blandishments too tempting to forego. 17

Hall would arrive in Wheeling during the unfolding of some of the most momentous events in the nation’s and the commonwealth’s history. The election of Abraham Lincoln as president had stimulated the secession of four states. The Confederate States of America entity was in process of organization. The Virginia General Assembly was proceeding to call a convention to consider the state’s relationship with the federal union. President-elect Lincoln confronted southern and some Republican propositions for sectional compromise, office-seekers, inauguration, and the Fort Sumter situation. The Charleston harbor bombardment, the president’s call for military volunteers, and the Virginia Convention’s adoption of a secession ordinance (17 April 1861) ignited a series of occurrences whose results were unpredictable. An unprecedented crisis faced the United States and western Virginians.

The critical period unleashed political responses in western Virginia that led to the creation of the thirty-fifth state of the United States. Although the original mass movement sprouted in various towns, the center of political action in western Virginia reposed in sympathetic and militarily secure Wheeling, Virginia’s second-largest city. From May through August 1861, a series of conventions would meet in Wheeling to restore the Commonwealth of Virginia on loyal grounds and initiate the process of new state creation. Also, the reorganized legislature of the Restored Government of Virginia assembled. Granville Davison Hall was present at all these assemblies,
reporting their proceedings to his newspaper. *Intelligencer* coverage was so thorough and comprehensive that the newspaper became the one of record for the West Virginia statehood movement and the Commonwealth of Virginia’s reorganization. Editor Archibald W. Campbell was not a passive reporter of events but sometimes aided in molding them. Hall came to know more than he reported as he observed the inner dynamics, maneuverings, and political actions of the public and private players. His personal views and observations of men would surface in the editorial columns of the *Intelligencer* between 1868 and 1872 and in his 1902 account. 18

Hall’s most amazing and fortunate reportorial accomplishment was his single-handed shorthand recording of all events and proceedings of West Virginia’s First Constitutional Convention. The convention met from 26 November 1861 to 18 February 1862 and from 12 February 1863 to 20 February 1863. He also had the prescience of mind to have John Frew, the head of his newspaper’s job shop, to furnish him six copies of every printed convention document. Hall carefully preserved them for posterity in a trunk. The convention had indicated an intention to contract with Hall to publish its proceedings and debates, but inadequate funds, lack of care, and the excitement of the times prevented this appropriate action. Within nine years, a new West Virginia Constitution (1872) would supplant the original one, removing any residual interest in publication. For the remainder of the century, Hall preserved his voluminous notes and documents and carried them to his future residences. Knowledge of their existence faded from all contemporary memory except for one man’s.

The appearance of *The Rending of Virginia* in 1902 indicated to careful readers that the author had more than his extraordinary recall to relate some aspects about the First Con-
stitutional Convention debate. In 1906, the decades-long, bitter controversy between Virginia and West Virginia over what portion of the antebellum Virginia debt that West Virginia might owe erupted again when Virginia sued West Virginia in the Supreme Court of the United States to compel payment. Learning of the suit, Hall wrote West Virginia’s governor, informing of his valuable treasure that might aid the Mountain State’s case. He offered to transcribe his shorthand notes into typed longhand if the state would compensate him for his labor. In order to secure possible legal ammunition for the impending law suit, the governor and legislature agreed to appropriate money to Hall for the 1906–7 transcription. 19

Hall’s work for the Intelligencer was politically and professionally satisfying, but his compensation level was not completely adequate. Also, reading and writing for deadlines at night by gaslight had caused eye and health problems. He supplemented his income by becoming the first clerk of the West Virginia House of Delegates, which met initially in Wheeling on the third Tuesday of January and thereafter on the same day for forty-five-day regular sessions. The placement was advantageous for a newspaper reporter. In the election of 1864, the state Republican Party nominated Granville Davisson Hall as its candidate for secretary of state on the ticket with Governor Arthur I. Boreman in his quest for a second term. During the 1864–65 winter, Governor Boreman retained Hall as his private secretary, and Hall again severed his connection with the Intelligencer. Hall and all Republican nominees were elected to state and national offices, and Hall served as secretary of state from 4 March 1865 to 3 March 1867. 20

Before the West Virginia Republicans renominated him for another term, Hall withdrew from the opportunity so that “some deserving and consistent Union soldier may be put in the place.” He believed that, all things being equal, United States Army
veterans "deserve the first consideration of all posts of honor or profit." Hall favored "men who went in with a musket" as the "truly disinterested and patriotic," not necessarily those "who went into the army with commissions in their pockets and straps on their shoulders." Acutely informing his view, Hall's elder brother, Van Buren, had entered the United States Army in Wheeling in August 1862 as a private in Company G, 12th Regiment of (West) Virginia Infantry Volunteers and saw heavy combat service in Virginia. 21

In 1867, Hall became a part-owner of the Wheeling Daily Intelligencer. Archibald W. Campbell and John F. McDermot jointly held the paper when the latter decided to sell his one-half interest. Hall and his well-connected and rising former assistant clerk, William Pallister Hubbard, purchased and equally split the McDermot half-interest. The twenty-four-year-old Hubbard was the son of a prominent Wheeling businessman and banker then serving in the United States House of Representatives. Like his father, Chester Dorman, William graduated from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, and he had succeeded Hall as the clerk of the West Virginia House of Delegates (1865–70). Hall became the city editor of the newspaper, but after a few months he chafed from the position's boredom. 22

The nation's capital again beckoned. Hall clerked for the United States Congress and reported hearings for a Joint Congressional Committee investigating alleged corruption in the Ordnance Department. He also reported a legal tender case, Tayloe v. Willard, for the Supreme Court of the United States. 23

In February 1868, Campbell and other owners of the Intelligencer urged Hall to return to Wheeling at once. Campbell wanted to leave his editorship and to dispose of his remaining one-fourth interest. Before this event, the paper had experienced ownership changes while Hall was away. Hubbard had sold his
one-fourth interest to Lucian A. Hagans, a Republican who had been Governor Francis H. Pierpont's secretary of the Restored Commonwealth of Virginia. Campbell had sold one-half of his one-half interest to John Frew, the head of the newspaper's job shop. Hall, Hagans, and Frew took Campbell's remaining portion and divided it equally, making each one-third partners in the enterprise. It was a great professional and political opportunity for Hall as he assumed editorial and business charge and maintained his dual role until 1873. In this position, he was the leading editorial voice of the Republican Party in West Virginia.24

During the Civil War and afterward, the State of West Virginia as well as the United States had to wrestle with the irresolvable dilemma that the modern democracy always faces in wartime: how to maintain sovereignty and preserve itself while keeping faith with democratic principles in combating internal and external enemies. State responses in civil emergencies always deeply affect existing political affiliations. Individual political allegiances, whether old Whig or Democratic, that transferred from Democratically dominated western Virginia to the new state were always fluid and tentative in the transitional period from 1861 to 1870 and quickly responded to state and national policies on major issues.

Most statemakers, who were or became Republicans, constantly faced internal political dissent and armed force, threatened and actual, as they governed, prosecuted a war for survival, and remained loyal to the Lincoln administration and its policies. Bitter political disagreement had existed from the beginning of the new state movement about its advisability, proper constitutional procedure, and adherence to Lincoln's acts preserving the Union and abolishing property relationships. Even among themselves, Republicans, though dominant in the first years, never enjoyed monolithic unanimity of
opinion in policy approaches. The exactions of war were severe. They never mustered overwhelming political consensus in statewide races, and their winning margins dwindled with each new election.

During and after the war, West Virginia Republicans and Unionists confronted severe internal security problems. The new state had incorporated counties that had furnished a majority of their soldiers to the Confederacy and, even in some loyal counties, a substantial minority harbored treasonous tendencies. Both Confederate and United States forces had intimidated, arbitrarily arrested, and imprisoned suspected and actual civilian and non-combatant enemies and opponents. During the war itself, the Boreman administration could depend on national military forces to ensure order and to perform most arbitrary acts; however, it did create the Home Guards, a sort of official paramilitary reserve corps to suppress the suspicious and to defend the state where civil authority was inadequate. Loyalty oaths were expected at all levels of governmental officials, attorneys, school teachers and school trustees, and suspicious civilians.

In the fall of 1864, great numbers of defeated Confederate soldiers swarmed back to their West Virginia homes and fully expected to assume immediately their prewar political status. Facing open expressions of hostility from the returnees and their allies, their formation of marauding armed bands in several counties, and the inability to collect taxes in some locales, the Boreman administration could not permit the former Confederates’ immediate political resurrection without assurances of political loyalty to the state. In February 1865, the state imposed an exacting voters’ test oath that excluded former Confederates and their sympathizers from the polls. It also provided for a suitors’ test oath and almost automatic changes of venue for legal cases from pro-rebel counties to loyal ones.
An effective voter registration system staffed by gubernatorial appointees homogenized the list of eligible voters. A key prescriptive measure was the ratification of a state constitutional amendment that removed state citizenship from former Confederates and their supporters.25

Granville Davisson Hall and other state Republicans generally supported these programs to prevent the immediate possibility of Confederate reversal of loyalist wartime political achievements. As Hall explained privately to a newspaper editor running for Congress, the disfranchising amendment "was not only just in its object, but absolutely vital as protecting the loyal people and government in the state against the domination of traitors and its unhappy consequences, among them the merging of the State into old Virginia." Cautioning a prominent Unionist Democrat in 1868, Hall warned that the West Virginia Democratic Party wished "to make the treason of the Rebellion respectable, to make loyalty to the government and devotion to the principles of universal freedom disreputable; and, in short, either directly or by indirection by some means to attain in this country the ends for which the rebellion was set on foot."26

What Hall confided privately about his fears of the political motivations of former rebels, he also proclaimed editorially. "We have always defended the policy which disfranchised [former Confederates]," he noted. "It was a measure of self-protection; and since in war the laws are silent, it was not inconsistent with the principles by which we had to be governed at the time. It was justified by the maxim that the safety of the people is the supreme law. So long after the cessation of hostilities the same rule required it, the continuance of the same policy was justified." "For we are to remember," Hall continued, "that when we decided to whip the rebels back into subjection to the Union, we of necessity accepted the conse-
quences of doing so. We did it to maintain the republican character of the Government and to compel them to be citizens under it.” In a later editorial, Hall emphasized that the measures of political proscription were only justified by “peril to the Government, danger of its overthrow, probable or remote, and threatened resistance to authority.”

In 1868, several state and national events caused Hall and other enlightened Republicans to realize that altered political circumstances required them to advocate new approaches in their civil treatment of former Confederates and their allies. Sometime after the election of Ulysses S. Grant as president and after considering the impact of the proposed Fifteenth Amendment in November 1868, editor Hall and other Liberal Republicans, called “Let Ups,” decided that philosophic and party republican principles and the state of domestic affairs prompted the removal of political disabilities in West Virginia. They believed that Grant’s election removed the country from all political and domestic peril. State political realities dictated change. In October 1866, the Republicans carried state-wide offices by a plurality of approximately 6,400. Two years later in October 1868, the Republican victory margin had dwindled to about 4,700. Continued political proscription and advocacy of ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, which would give the vote to West Virginia blacks, were surely a deadly formula for winning future elections.

Although he did not reveal the correspondence to his readers until May 1869, Hall had previously contacted Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, about mutual political concerns. Greeley had advocated a constitutional amendment guaranteeing “Universal Suffrage and Universal Amnesty.” Hall, also advocating an amendment that enfranchised blacks, wrote Greeley that, if his amendment also included rebels, it would not pass Congress and, if it did, it would fail in ratification. Hall added that in West
Virginia the legislature would never ratify his proposed constitutional amendment if it enfranchised rebels. Hall simply expressed his analysis, not a personal opinion, about the merit of enfranchising former Confederates. On 18 November 1868, Greeley, misunderstanding Hall’s statement as a personal view, warned Hall and his fellow West Virginia Republicans that the rebels and their sons would inevitably be enfranchised and blacks would be left without the ballot. In fewer than six years, the former Confederates would attain victory in West Virginia. “Every year will see the passions of the war cool, and the demand for amnesty strengthened,” Greeley cautioned. “Now you can amnesty the rebels. Soon the question will be, Shall they amnesty you?” Hall would bide his time on the specific issue of enfranchisement of former Confederates, but in November 1868, before receiving Greeley’s letter, he had enthusiastically endorsed ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, which assured the franchise to West Virginia African Americans. On 12 May 1869, Hall revealed his newspaper’s new approach by endorsing enfranchisement of former Confederates in West Virginia.29

In October 1869, responding to a letter to the editor, Granville Hall clarified his position on the enfranchisement of West Virginia rebels. He preferred to have a single amendment to the state constitution enfranchising former Confederates and blacks together. “We will never consent to have one without the other,” he emphasized, “because there is no reason in favor of the rebel that is not equally in favor of the black man.” “As a matter of abstract justice, the colored man’s right is the best; as a measure of civil equality, of political necessity and of harmony, both are alike imperative,” he equitably concluded.30

Consistent with his approach, Hall wrote what became known in West Virginia as the Flick Amendment to Article III, section 1, of the West Virginia Constitution of 1863 and the amendment of
24 May 1866. It simply proposed to strike the word "white" as a requirement for voting and to eliminate the 1866 amending clause. The amendment removed state citizenship and the franchise from any person who, after 1 June 1861, had "given, or shall give volunteer aid or assistance to the rebellion against the United States," unless he volunteered for United States naval or military service and was honorably discharged. Adoption of the proposal would open the franchise to blacks and rebels. Most Democratic leaders instinctively opposed the Flick Amendment, but they seldom revealed their rationale for opposition. They objected because former Confederates would share the franchise with blacks. Hall gave his proposed amendment to his former newspaper partner and successor as clerk of the West Virginia House of Delegates, William P. Hubbard, to review. Both decided that William Henry Harrison Flick, a Republican delegate from Pendleton County, was the best person to introduce the measure. Flick agreed to and did so on 31 January 1870. Proposed amendments to the West Virginia Constitution required passage by two consecutive legislatures before submission to the electorate. Before final ratification of the Flick Amendment, political events had made its adoption moot.31

What Greeley and Hall had foreseen came true with a vengeance. In 1869, the Republicans won the majority of fall legislative elections, but the "Let Up" wing generally prevailed over Loyalist Republicans, who favored the continuation of imposition of civil disabilities. In 1870, the Conservative/Democratic Party achieved control of the governorship, most state-wide offices, and both houses of the legislature. They would sweep aside all vestiges of political proscription and would write a new constitution in 1872 that would substantially change the "Yankee" Constitution of 1863 and its amendments. The Bourbon Democrats would dominate state politics for the remainder of the century.
After 1869, Hall and his newspaper were valiantly swimming against the political mainstream. Thoroughly dedicated to egalitarian principles, editor Hall took the unpopular position of defending a black man's right to ride inside a Wheeling streetcar with white riders. In the 1869 session, in a complicated series of procedural maneuvers, the West Virginia Legislature arranged to move the state capital on 1 April 1870 from Wheeling to Charleston. Even though the removal to the southern location was not necessarily permanent, the prospect of Wheeling's demise as the political center did not bode well for the future. 

In September 1873, various plans of the three partners of the Intelligencer coincided to cause Hall to contemplate his future. Because of his extensive property interests in Chicago, Lucian A. Hagans approached Hall to sell his one-third interest so that he could move and devote time to his other affairs. Hall purchased the Hagans interest and later told John Frew, the other partner, who said nothing. Hall then offered Frew his two-thirds share of the paper and told him that Archibald W. Campbell, tiring of his managerial position with the Belmont Iron Works, wished to return to the firm. Frew and Campbell purchased Hall's share and then split the ownership into two equal portions. Granville Hall took a year's sabbatical at his parents' home, which he had purchased for them in 1870, in Belmont, Ohio.

Late in 1874, Hall traveled again to Washington, D.C., for an extended visit. After his return to Belmont, a friend invited him to come to Pittsburgh to become the traveling and personal secretary to James D. Layng, the general manager of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. In 1881, Hall moved with Layng to Chicago, where the latter became general manager of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. Except for a six-month interval when he worked as secretary for the president of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad at Louisville, Kentucky,
Hall remained with the Chicago and Northwestern Road until 1890. On Lake Michigan, he had established his residence in the new northwestern Chicago suburb of Glencoe. After 1890, Hall began a town newspaper and conducted the Glencoe town office. During the late 1890s, Hall’s thoughts of distant West Virginia would stimulate his pen.  

Haunted like other Appalachian migrants, Granville Davisson Hall might have physically been separated from the hills for some time, but his mind and memory always revisited the scenes of earlier days. This life force inevitably directed the course of his best writing, both fictional and historical. Apparently after his productive writing years and before his death on 24 June 1934 at age ninety-seven, Hall deteriorated mentally and would continually call at the local railroad station to purchase a ticket to return to his “home,” Wheeling, West Virginia. His initial retirement writing consisted of random essays on a wide variety of topics and a compilation of the correspondence of Henry Demarest Lloyd, the first author to arraign the Standard Oil Trust, but his most insightful and important work would emerge when he returned to West Virginia and hill themes.

Because of its unique and sometimes exceptional content, its historical accuracy, and its iconoclastic and original interpretations, Hall’s literary work deserves to be better known by students of the Appalachian region, the Virginias, and the Civil War era. Clear and direct prose mark his historical work. He composed his printed book and pamphlet output between 1897 and 1910. The author published and sold all his work, and Mayer & Miller of Chicago was the sole printer. His first effort was his only novel, appearing in 1899, and was his best selling. *The Daughter of the Elm* passed through three editions, the last in 1915. His remaining work concentrated on historical themes. *The Rending of Virginia*, his most important work,
emerged in 1902. Written in 1898 and published in 1907 was Hall's distinctive memoir, *Old Gold*, a rare treasury of central western Virginia recollections. In 1911, *Lee's Invasion of Northwestern Virginia in 1861*, whose title left no doubt about its interpretive thrust, appeared to counteract prevailing contemporary interpretations at the time of the Civil War's semicentennial celebration. The same motivation generated his last work, a fifty-four-page pamphlet, written in 1910 and published in 1915. This delayed effort was a political and historical tract with an exhaustive descriptive title: *The Two Virginias: Genesis of the Old and New; "A Romance of American History;" State Sovereignty: Phantom of a Stupendous Folly*.

*Daughter of the Elm: A Tale of Western Virginia Before the War* circulated widely, but nowhere did the volume achieve greater readership than in the West Fork River Valley of Harrison and Marion Counties, West Virginia. By setting his tale in this area on the eve of the Civil War, just a few decades before its substantial transformation, Hall's knowing recall of a more bucolic and beautiful landscape and of original founding families within living memory provoked a deep nerve of reminiscence among West Fork natives about a destroyed and escaped past. The lower West Fork Valley bore the rich Pittsburgh bituminous coal seam that attracted new migratory peoples and the most devastating alterations that the industrial Gilded Age could unleash upon a landform. The author's use of scenes and thinly disguised local names only added to the volume's appeal to residents who followed horse thievery, arsons, and unsolved murders in familiar territory. Hall set the love story, requited and unrequited, of Loraine Esmond and her larcenous and murderous family and neighbors on the Big Elm Farm on the West Fork River bank, near Shinnston, the town of his youth. His descriptions of the countryside, the characters, and their labor were accurate reflections of contemporary
rural reality and, at times, achieved eloquence. Easy and intimate familiarity with western Virginia scenes and people and his use of actual sites convey local color with great impact. In later editions, Hall added striking photographs of the West Fork places in the novel, including one of a new coal company town with the caption that the book's first edition was "loaned around at ten cents a read."

While he wrote his first book, Hall worked the summer of 1898 on a memoir of his boyhood in his West Virginia hill community. Like the irritating grain that eventually produces the fine pearl, removal from the hills and thoughts of the past both bothered and stimulated Hall to recollect vividly his upbringing in the 1840s and 1850s. Relating the stories gilded in his mind with the old gold of romance, Hall had a title for the slim volume that he eventually published in 1907. His achievement in Old Gold was substantial; few literate and accurate portrayals of contemporary central western Virginia antebellum rural society and community life exist. Few memoirs exceed Hall's discernment about his boyhood acquaintances and reflections, the meaning of the hills, and the rhythms of nature. 36

Although Hall revealed himself and his boyhood experiences to a great extent, he extended his account beyond the personal to encompass the rurality and full agricultural being of his community. Household industries were pervasive as was the inhabitants' dependence on the products of field, forest, and streams. The character sketches are memorable and analytical: the various artisans of varying skill and industry, the family patriarchs, the Virginia gentlemen with easy manners, the patriotic, and various sorts of women mingle with the sharpers, money-makers, religious, indolent, tipplers, and gladiators. Among the patriotic was the industrious man with "the gift of continuance" with wife and children who offered
himself at fifty-two years to the local Union Army company. Persistence led to acceptance and active service for two years until failing health caused his discharge. 37

Apart from the extensive number of personal portraits, Old Gold conveys all of the economic and social patterns present in the 1840s and 1850s in the upper Monongahela Valley. The movement and migration of people were generally upstream, as Hall emphasized, like the spawning fish. The western movement was a constant magnet for both enterprising and desperate farmers and artisans. Most valuable were Hall's detailed observations of the harvesting of virgin timber and its movement overland and by water to markets as far downriver as Pittsburgh. Hall not only traced the harbinger activities of extractive industry, but he lamented the degrading environmental effects of human enterprise. 38

Responding as he had in The Rending of Virginia to late-nineteenth-century glorification of the Lost Cause and recognizing the semicentennial year of the Civil War, the persistent author published his fourth book about western Virginia affairs in 1861. This one, however, concentrated on the military conflict in the mountains between the loyal and the traitorous. The title, Lee's Invasion of Northwest Virginia in 1861, candidly conveys the slim volume's interpretation. It provided an account, based primarily upon the Official Records of the War of Rebellion, of the defeat of the Confederate Army in northwestern Virginia in June and July. Hall hoped to attack the pervasive contemporary popularity of the heroic and romantic Confederate version of the war. He called those who perpetrated such notions apologists for an ill-advised attempt at national suicide. To Hall, the American Rebellion was simply an indefensible crime.

Initially, Hall, questioning contemporary opinion about
General Robert E. Lee's military prowess, reminded readers that Lee was a complete failure in his Northwestern Virginia campaign. The public should not hold visions of Napoleonic grandeur as Lee excelled only in fighting defensive campaigns. Hall conceded that Lee was a gentleman and displayed exemplary postwar conduct that appealed to southerners who needed a hero. Lee's peacetime character had utilitarian value in convincing the unaware of the righteousness of the rebel cause.

Hall seized the irony that one of the primary justifications for secession was to resist the Lincoln administration's coercion. These same resisters, however, had no such compunction against employing coercion when they attempted to control political opinion and loyal impulses in western Virginia. He perceptively identified the possible role that western Virginians who fled to Richmond at the outbreak of war might have played in stimulating Confederate authorities in their efforts to hold the west.

Few can accept, without serious reservation, Hall's historical genealogy of secession from the Jacobin Jefferson, unduly influenced by French revolutionaries, protesting the Alien and Sedition Acts, through Calhoun to the misguided Virginia seceders. He saw Federalist suppression of political opponents in the same light as Lincoln's actions to preserve the Union. Only the Hamiltonian Federalists were loyal. He ignored the Hartford Convention. As in *The Rending of Virginia*, Hall saw a Virginia secessionist conspiracy in most public antebellum state acts.

Hall's interpretations of the wartime events he experienced are more reliable, temperate, and historically sustainable. Like western Virginia loyalists, he condemned as a usurpation the Virginia General Assembly's calling of the Secession Convention without electoral consultation. While tracing the United States forces' campaign of liberation with the glorious victories at Philippi and Rich Mountain, he condemned General
George B. McClellan’s timidity in attack and his hesitancy to maximize the achievements of others. McClellan did not attack at Rich Mountain when he had promised, but the gallant William S. Rosecrans won despite his commander’s desertion. McClellan failed to capture the entire Confederate Army at Laurel Hill and in the Tygart Valley in the battle’s immediate aftermath. General Lee also received more criticism. The Virginian did not comprehend the magnitude of mountaineer loyalty to the United States and overestimated the number of volunteers that his army would garner. Lee also sent out General Robert S. Garnett without a military plan to execute and with little support. Lee’s final failure was his inability to hold the northwestern mountain passes against the enemy.

The author’s most noteworthy interpretive contribution arose from his condemnation of General McClellan’s “imbecility” in delaying his military thrust into the Great Kanawha Valley. This hesitation allowed precious manpower to drift into the Confederate Army by way of the militia. Also, the result would deeply affect southern West Virginia politics into the distant future. Hall accused McClellan of mixing his personal political views with national military necessity. George William Summers, Benjamin Harrison Smith, and Lewis Ruffner—all prominent Kanawha County residents—had visited the United States commander at Gallapolis, Ohio, to urge him not to send troops into the valley because the Confederate Army was not present and because the act might swing local opinion into the rebel camp. Summers departed the group, and Smith and Ruffner proceeded to Cincinnati to hold a meeting with McClellan on 1 June. The general concurred in the request. What was not conveyed by the visitors was that various Kanawha militia officers, commanded by Governor John Letcher, were actively organizing their units and recruiting troops. Six days after the Cincinnati meeting, General Henry
Alexander Wise arrived on the Kanawha to command the units. McClellan delayed any order to proceed into the area until 2 July. This act adversely cost the loyal Kanawha element. Hall's shorthand notes of George William Summers's tortuous explanation in Wheeling on 3 August 1863 were important in documenting the affair.

Motivated by the coming Civil War semicentennial celebration and the unveiling of the statue of Francis Harrison Pierpont, governor of the Restored Government of Virginia, on 30 April 1910 in the United States Capitol, Hall wrote The Two Virginias, essentially an historical brief, attacking wrong-headed denigration of the constitutional restoration of Virginia and the lauding of state sovereignty. An ignorant speech on the latter occasion by a United States senator from Pennsylvania was particularly objectionable, reminiscent of the spouting of Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens. Hall knew who was loyal and disloyal in the 1860s to the Constitution of the United States, and he was not going to allow contemporary distortions of the record to cover Virginia's treasonous past.

Hall reminded all readers that it was his "fortune—or misfortune—to get mixed up with the Virginia ruction at the beginning of the civil war in 1861" and that he was "one of the remaining few who knew from personal contact somewhat of the men and the measures that figured in the Virginia Restoration, at Wheeling." Repeating previous themes of antebellum Virginia perfidy toward democratic principles and western Virginia and reviewing the events in Richmond in December 1865 based on testimony before the United States Congress's Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Hall established the case for constitutional legitimacy for the Restored Government and the illegality and unconstitutionality of revolutionary Virginia acts. The elderly loyalist expanded his previous assault by indicting the Commonwealth
of Virginia's postwar legitimacy. In December 1865, Governor Francis H. Pierpont had fatally surrendered the Restored Government under its 1864 Alexandria constitution to an unlawful General Assembly composed of constitutionally ineligible legislators. 39

For full appreciation of The Rending of Virginia, an understanding of the historiographic context of its appearance is necessary. Up to 1902, only three consequential published book-length recollections about the West Virginia statehood experience had circulated: those of Theodore Lang, Granville Parker, and Waitman Patrick Willey. Stimulated by the milestone of three score and ten years for men in their twenties during the conflict, contemporaries at century's turn would produce a plethora of accounts in the subsequent decade, but Hall was in the vanguard. Little work could inform the author in his effort, except contemporary newspapers such as the Intelligencer, his shorthand notes, his inquiries of participants, and his remarkable memory. Under these conditions, Hall's achievement was notable. 40

Motivation was at least two-fold. Hall possessed a refined sense of history, and his friends and acquaintances recognized it. In 1861, George McCandless Porter, a Republican statemaker, had urged Hall to preserve the various convention documents and to write a history of the time. Something more than historical considerations and Civil War semicentennialitis inspired Granville Davison Hall. Southern apologists and "old secessionists," trying to make the gullible believe that their rebellion was to vindicate state sovereignty dogma, offended him. Particularly galling was John Goode Jr., a secessionist relic of Bedford County in the Virginia Convention, marketing the idea in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1901–2. To Hall, the cause of rebellion was simple—the defense of slavery. 41
Hall’s political and personal perspective dictated the meaning of character and patriotism. He knew where participants stood and conveyed his opinion. He witnessed the politicians’ subsequent attempts to cast their Civil War temporizing or treasonous behavior in better light for subsequent generations. Hall readily called such people to account—General John Jay Jackson, George William Summers, and Waitman Thomas Willey, for example. He dissected those who made contributions to the cause of statehood and the Union, who grew faint of heart, and who deserted the cause—such as John Snyder Carlile and Daniel Lamb. Of course, his heroes emerge—all loyal to the United States and anti-slavery—Archibald W. Campbell, Killian V. Whaley, and the Rev. Gordon Battelle. Also, Hall comprehended the flaws and majestic sacrifices of minor and peripheral people.

For the careful researcher, the volume can reveal some amazing stories. One example would be John N. Hughes’s death on 11 July 1861 at Rich Mountain. Hughes had been elected as a rabid Unionist delegate from Randolph County to the Virginia Convention. He reversed his position and voted for the secession ordinance on 17 April. Almost three months later, he was a civilian volunteer carrying a combat dispatch between Confederate officers at Rich Mountain. As Hughes galloped west from Beverly to the battlefield, he encountered troops that he thought to be part of the United States line and shouted “Hurrah for Lincoln.” The mistaken Confederate soldiers returned the greeting by shooting him dead with seventeen or eighteen bullets. Hall revealed Hughes as one of his schoolteachers in Shinnston. Hall’s memoir of boyhood reveals that an unnamed man came from Pennsylvania to teach two or three years. He began dissipating and left the village southward to the mountains. He read law and was admitted to the bar “with no resources beyond his brains and courage.” He walked the rounds of the mountainous court cir-
cuit. Hall met him again at Philippi in the fall 1860, a half-year before his demise. Hall noted that the anonymous teacher became "victim of a fatal mistake in the second collision, at Rich Mountain."\(^{42}\)

An important contribution is the emphasis on family, personal relationships, and individual and family personality in dissecting regional politics. Hall had an innate Appalachian and rural comprehension of the importance of these factors in the area's nineteenth-century public life, and his observations remain very useful. Any serious student of West Virginia and Appalachia must recognize these often vital and determinate aspects in historical and political evolution. A few examples demonstrate the contribution. No modern historian of the statehood period has conclusively explained the abrupt reversal of John S. Carlile from his ardent fervor in favor of statehood. Hall believed that Senator Waldo P. Johnson of Missouri, Carlile's closest legislative friend, had influenced him. Senator Johnson was a nephew of former Virginia Governor Joseph Johnson of Carlile's home county. Governor Johnson, though a secessionist, was still a factor in county politics. Senator Johnson would go south in 1864. General John Jay Jackson of Parkersburg, with family branches in Harrison and Lewis Counties, was a zealous Unionist until the May convention. He wished to avoid the inevitable action of state formation and go home because it was "corn-planting time," although it had been a long time since the general had planted corn. Hall observed that the Jacksons were wealthy and influential. The general had become "arrogant and dogmatic," required "deference," and demanded "his unquestioned way" for his cooperation. Several notable Jacksons, including one of the general's sons, were Confederates. The Lincoln administration tried to placate the family with a federal district judgeship for another son, and, as Hall recalled, West Virginia Republicans subsequently rued the
appointment. Hall related contemporary stories that might have explained the secret twelve-year disappearance of James H. Ferguson, West Virginia's mystery man, who reappeared in state politics in 1864 to assume a prominent leadership role from Cabell County, including the introduction in February 1865 of the bill that abolished slavery in the state. 43

Few distorters of historical fact escaped Hall's scrupulous and emphatic correction. Without naming the author of a misrepresentation of debate that involved the noble Rev. Gordon Battelle, Hall effectively refuted John Marshall Hagans, who contended that full debate occurred on the Battelle Resolution on slave emancipation. In fact, a gag resolution had prevented any debate on the issue. Hall charged Hagans with a "perversion of history." 44

What is most telling about the stature of Hall's interpretations and factual presentation is that some professional historians have often avoided addressing his insightful use of evidence and his fatal dissections of later political claims. One might compare Hall's view of Waitman Thomas Willey with Charles Henry Ambler's laudatory biographical interpretation and see how Ambler skirted many important matters where his subject later exaggerated his usually wavering and hesitant public stance. Ambler generally viewed Willey as a steadfast Unionist and West Virginia patriot while Hall believed that Willey never merited the high distinction that the people conferred. Willey, he thought, lived long enough (to 1900) to enhance and favorably shade his public record. Willey was an opportunistic and trimming "still-hunter" who quickly adapted to political reality and who owed preferment to strong Methodist support. The Virginia Convention secessionists, knowing him well, never condemned Willey to the extent that they did other western Unionist delegates. Willey was an obstructionist in
the May convention and caused delegates to delay action unnec-
ecessarily. Upon the West Virginia Bill’s introduction in the United
States Senate, he initially refused to counter Carlile’s sabotage at-
ttempts and later opposed emancipation of slaves. He belatedly
adopted the imposed gradual emancipation amendment (written
by Congressman William Guy Brown) as his own and imprinted
his name on it.45

The contours of Hall’s keen interpretation are clear to any
reader. Because of slavery, Virginia’s historical evolution betrayed
democratic and republican principles, made reform impossible,
and led inevitably to destructive consequences. The primacy of
the preservation of slavery, obscured by assertions of abstract gov-
ernmental theory such as states’ rights, prevailed universally in
1861 from the Virginia legislative chambers to Metropolitan Hall.
Secessionist political leaders had in 1860–61 cast the die that fore-
closed democratic and rational action favorable to the United
States. They had conspired to frame the debate, to rig the proce-
dure of the convention process, to dupe the unwary, to pack
the Committee on Federal Relations, and to arrange a howling secessionist mob to intimidate. The convention’s tragic outcome
was a foregone conclusion. Hall logically exposed the fiction of
conditional Unionism as an unsustainable illusion and a predest-
tined cloak for eventual secession. The restoration of Virginia
on a loyal basis and the West Virginia statehood movement,
which the timid and traitorous sometimes impeded, were sub-
lime accomplishments.

Discerning modern readers interested in the Civil War-era
Virginias can profit from familiarity with Granville Davison
Hall’s provocative narrative and interpretations. The author’s
strident loyalist approach, his incisive editorial-style writing,
pungent honesty and candor, and universal condemnation of
the rebellious, their sympathizers, and even temporizers will
repel some and inspire others. The book contains unique and important historical material, and it will remind all that undetached history can be meritorious. Hall’s cogent writing and stirring viewpoints are bugle calls, more than echoes, from the mountains.

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NOTES

1. *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, 30 Apr. 1861 (hereafter cited as *WDI*).
4. *Debates and Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention* 3: 469–98. Hall considered Willey’s presentation as “superfluous” and as an attempt to elevate himself by taking undeserved credit for the gradual emancipation amendment to the statehood bill. The delegates were already convinced to accept this additional condition to secure statehood. Hall, *The Rending of Virginia*, 501.
5. Granville Davison Hall, “Biographical Sketch for Fairmont High


Commission of West Virginia, 1913), 525–32. Hall recalled the Shinns as having received by their birth and upbringing “a theologic warp” and that the family “seemed, in a degree, crazy about religion,” with few exceptions. Hall, Old Gold (Chicago: Mayer and Miller Co., 1907), 77–78.


11. Hall, “Biographical Sketch, 1917,” and “Frag. Autobiography, 1922.” The author might have related his own, not familial, educational experience when he wrote of Loraine, one of the central characters in his first novel: she, “though favored with few opportunities of education, had acquired more than most girls do under like disadvantages.” “The most symmetrical body may be dwarfed or deformed by unfavorable conditions, but the mind that is nobly born reaches out through penury or misfortune and puts aside obstacles of every nature to grasp the sustenance required to nourish it for its divine mission; and it finds light, inspiration and knowledge where grosser spirits only grope in darkness and sink under the wretchedness of their condition.” Loraine has assimilated a few great books and read current newspapers. Though unaware of it, she possessed superior mental elevation. Daughter of the Elm: A Tale of Western Virginia Before the War (3d ed.; Chicago: Mayer & Miller Co., 1913), 177–78.


21. Granville D. Hall to Gen. R. S. Northcott, 26 June 1866, GDH Papers. File of Van B. Hall, Cert. #302695, Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900, Record Group 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, NAB.


27. First quotation: WDI, 12 May 1869; second quotation: 21 May 1869.

28. WDI, 21 May 1869.

29. WDI, 11 Nov. 1868, 12 May 1869.

30. WDI, 5 Oct. 1869.


32. WDI, 19 Aug. 1869.


34. Ibid.


40. Theodore Lang, Loyal West Virginia From 1861 to 1865, With an Introductory Chapter on the Status of Virginia for Thirty Years prior to the Civil War (Baltimore: Deutsch Publishing Co., 1885); Granville Parker, The Formation of the State of West Virginia and Other Incidents of the Late Civil War (Wellsburg: Glass & Son, 1875); Waitman P. Willey,


44. Hall, The Rending of Virginia, 430.

45. Ibid., 252–53, 261–64, 342–46, 457–62, 468, 563–71. Ambler, Waitman Thomas Willey (Huntington, W.V.: Standard Printing & Publishing Co., 1954), especially 79–89. In 1906, at the request of John Frew, Hall effectively refuted an anonymous letter (written by Waitman Patrick Willey) to the editor of WDI that had questioned the proposed erection of the statue of Francis Harrison Pierpont as one of West Virginia’s honored statesmen in Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol. Hall exposed the writer’s father for his pervasive trimming on all phases of the West Virginia question while he defended Pierpont’s pure and selfless loyalty. Clippings from WDI, 1 Dec. 1906, GDH Papers.