

Hill, John ^[1]

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by Ralph J. Christian, 1988

9 Apr. 1797–24 May 1861

John Hill, planter, county official, legislator, and congressman, was born near Germanton, the son of John and Mary Elizabeth Hill. After attending country schools, he entered [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[2] as a member of the class of 1820 but failed to graduate. He returned home to [Stokes County](#) ^[3], where for the rest of his life he combined his public and private careers. From 1819 to 1823 he represented Stokes in the North Carolina House of Commons, and served in the North Carolina Senate in 1823, 1825–26, 1830–31, and 1848–49. At various intervals over a thirty-year period he held the post of clerk of court.

During the political controversies of the 1830s, Hill, an admirer of [Andrew Jackson](#) ^[4], emerged as one of the leaders of the Democratic party in North Carolina. In 1836 he ran as an elector on the Van Buren ticket, and the following year challenged [Augustine H. Shepperd](#) ^[5], a former Jacksonian then in the [Whig](#) ^[6] ranks, for the Fifth District seat in Congress, narrowly losing by 117 votes. In an 1839 rematch Hill, running on a platform of opposition to rechartering the United States Bank and support for the Independent Treasury plan, defeated Shepperd by 47 votes.

Hill's service in the Twenty-sixth Congress was generally undistinguished. He made few speeches and confined his activities primarily to defending the policies of President Martin Van Buren, particularly the Independent Treasury idea which was finally enacted into law in 1840. Hill declined to stand for reelection in 1841. Back in Stokes County, he devoted himself to his planting interests but still remained active in state and local politics.

After representing Stokes in the 1848–49 session of the Senate, Hill became chief clerk of that body in 1850 and served for several years. In 1861, he was elected to represent Stokes in the [secession convention](#) ^[7] that took North Carolina out of the Union. While attending the convention in Raleigh, Hill had a stroke and died. He was buried in the Old Hill Burying Ground near Germanton.

References:

Biog. Dir. Am. Cong. (1971).

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Additional Resources:

"Hill, John, (1797 - 1861)." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. Washington, D.C.: The Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000594> ^[8] (accessed April 23, 2014).

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[Christian, Ralph J.](#) ^[11]

Origin - location:

[Stokes County](#) ^[12]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[13]

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