

Shepperd, Augustine Henry ^[1]

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by Daniel M. McFarland, 1994

24 Feb. 1792–11 July 1864

Augustine Henry Shepperd, lawyer and congressman, was born at Rockford, a village on the Yadkin ^[2] and the seat of Surry County ^[3] until 1851. His parents were Jacob and Pamela Shepperd. In early life he practiced law in his hometown and represented his county in the lower house of the Assembly from 1822 to 1826. He was a presidential elector for the People's ticket ^[4] of Andrew Jackson ^[5] and John C. Calhoun in 1824.

Shepperd began his congressional career in March 1827, when he defeated Bedford Brown ^[6] for the seat vacated by Romulus Saunders ^[7]. Though elected as a Jackson man, his political course in time took him into the ranks of the Whigs ^[8]. He opposed nullification, supported Jackson's Force Bill, and championed the national bank. In 1836 he pledged to support the choice of the electorate of his state should the presidential contest be decided in the House of Representatives, but he clearly preferred someone other than Martin Van Buren. For five terms Shepperd was reelected without serious competition until Democrat John Hill ^[9] defeated him in 1839. Two years later Shepperd regained his seat by defeating David S. Reid ^[10], of Wentworth, the future Democratic governor and U.S. senator. Reid held the seat from 1843 to 1847. Shepperd then returned to serve two final terms from 1847 to 1851.

During his eighteen years in Congress Shepperd held several important committee assignments, and he gained some prominence as one of the leading southern Whigs. He was a presidential elector on the Whig ticket in 1844, and he played a role in getting President Millard Fillmore to appoint William A. Graham ^[11] as secretary of the navy in 1850.

In October 1842 Shepperd bought forty-one acres from the Moravians ^[12]. On this land, located within the bounds of modern Winston-Salem ^[13], the Shepperds built a home that they called Good Spring. Augustine had married a Miss Turner during his first term in Congress. They had at least seven children. Samuel Turner Shepperd was a graduate of West Point in 1854 and died the following year while on frontier duty in Kansas. William Henry was next. Francis E., the third son, was a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and later served in the Confederate navy. Hamilton saw service in the Confederate army, and Jacob was killed at Fredericksburg in 1862. Mary Frances married William Dorsey Pender just before the Civil War; her famous husband was fatally wounded at Gettysburg. Pamela Martha married William S. Mallory in 1867.

After retiring from Congress in 1851, Shepperd returned to Forsyth County ^[14] and resumed the practice of law. He died there and was buried in Salem Cemetery.

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