

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

Benjamin Franklin Stewart:

Born 1809 in New York, Benjamin Stewart came to Wood County as a young man. He owned several businesses in Wirt County, including shoe mending and watch and clock repair. He owned a general store and served as a notary public in Newark, West Virginia and had minor real estate holdings in the town. Stewart represented Wirt County at the First Constitutional Convention, and served as deputy Provost Marshal of the First Congressional District of West Virginia. In this post he was subject to personal danger, as his duty was to deal with deserters and parolees in a community with strong Confederate leanings. His store was looted by rebel sympathizers and Stewart escaped with his life only by hiding in the attic of a neighboring house. He died in 1892 and was buried in Fought Cemetery, Newark, Wirt County. (West Virginia. et al., 95-96)

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