

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 Kelly L. Pruett

### **Gustavus Friend Taylor**

Gustavus Friend Taylor (June 27, 1834-October 5, 1915), delegate from Braxton County, was a native of that county and was educated in its schools. At the age of twenty-two he went to Cass County, Missouri, where he remained for two years. He then returned to Braxton County until 1861. About the time of his service as a constitution maker, he was employed in the office of Provost Marshal General Joseph Darr in Wheeling. Under a West Virginia law of 1864, he was in the latter part of that year commissioned captain of the "Braxton county Scouts" and served in that capacity until the end of the war.

For some time after the war Taylor continued his varied activities. From January 12 to December 13, 1865, he was a recorder of Braxton County. He was then its superintendent of schools for two years. Then he became owner, editor, and publisher of the Sutton *Mountaineer*. He had meanwhile read law and February 1, 1870, he was admitted to the bar of Braxton County, and from 1871 to 1872, was prosecuting attorney of that county. He then engaged in merchandising in Sutton until 1880, when he moved to Wheeling, West Virginia. There he was a merchant until near the time of his death.

Sources:

Atkinson and Gibbens, *Prominent Men*, pp. 944-949; John D. Sutton, *History of Braxton county and Central West Virginia*, pp. 62, 146, 175; *Wheeling Intelligencer*, October 6, 1915.

Ambler, Charles H., Francis Haney Atwood and William B. Mathews, editors, *Debates and Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of West Virginia (1861-1863)*, pp. 96-97, Huntington: Gentry Brothers Printers.