

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

Taft, Nathan H.

Nathan H. Taft, delegate from Barbour County, a native of New England, located in Philippi about 1848, for the practice of law. Some years later he married Mary E., daughter of Rev. Solomon and Elizabeth Jarvis. He was elected Prosecuting Attorney September 27, 1861 in Barbour County. He moved to Buckhannon in 1862 where he became editor of the *Republican*, published in Buckhannon. It was the organ of the conservative party, and opposed the conscriptive methods of the radicals. The paper incurred the enmity of those whom it opposed, and violence was threatened to prevent its publication. But it came out regularly with the assistance of James W. Woffindin, a young newspaper man.

He had taken a prominent part in politics during the war. In 1861 he was chosen member of the second Wheeling Convention which re-organized the government of Virginia. Early in the same year, when Thomas A. Bradford and Samuel Woods were candidates for the Richmond convention, which passed the Ordinance of Secession, Mr. Taft supported Mr. Woods, believing that he was friendlier to a preservation of the Union. When Mr. Woods while a member of the Convention, introduced resolutions declaring the Federal Government ought to recognize the independence of the Seceeded States, Mr. Taft upheld the position taken by Mr. Woods; and in a meeting held in Philippi on March 7, 1861, was one of a committee which drafted resolutions

sustaining Mr. Woods. When the war actually came, Mr. Taft supported the North. He was in Philippi on June 3 when the federal artillery opened on the town; and from an attic window, he watched the Confederates going up the pike, and was heard to exclaim, "Thank God!" Mr. Taft died at Weston, January 3, 1867.

Sources:

Ancestry.com - The History of Barbour County, West Virginia: from its earliest exploration.

http://search.ancestry.com/Browse/BookView.aspx?dbid=30032&iid=dvm_LocHist013653 (accessed November 17, 2010).