

Northern Kentucky
Views presents . . .

Harrison Taylor

TAYLOR, HON. HARRISON, Lawyer, son of Joseph and Elizabeth (Harrison) Taylor, was born August 10, 1810, in Lewis County, Kentucky. His father was a Pennsylvanian, and his mother a Virginian, but they were married in Lewis County, in this State, and he was their first child. He obtained some education, and, at the age of fifteen, entered the office of the Clerk for the County and Circuit, where he wrote for four years. He then entered the office of the Clerk of Mason County and Circuit Courts, at Washington; was soon after appointed Deputy Clerk; while engaged in the duties of that office used all his spare time in study and in reading law, in which he was greatly assisted by Hon. John Chambers, Governor of Iowa under Gen. Harrison; was admitted to the bar in 1833, and at once entered upon his legal career, in partnership with Rev. John A. McClung, then a brilliant lawyer. This connection continued until 1850, when Mr. McClung returned to the pulpit. Mr. Taylor was not a great speaker, but was an indefatigable and exhaustive worker; this pleased Mr. McClung, who had a distaste for the drudgery of preparation, and gloried in the contests of the court. Thus organized, this became one of the most able and popular law firms in Northern Kentucky. In 1836, he was elected to represent Mason County in the Legislature; in 1839, was appointed, by Gov. Clark, Commonwealth Attorney for the district, of which Maysville was then a part; held that position until 1850; in that year was a candidate for the Constitutional Convention, but was defeated; was for several years County Attorney for Mason County; in 1857, was elected, from Mason and Lewis Counties, to the State Senate; his term expired in 1861; was, in that year, elected to the Lower House of the Legislature; was re-elected in 1863; was chosen Speaker; was again elected in 1865, and re-elected Speaker, serving as Speaker of the House from 1863 to 1867; in 1864, he was chosen Presidential Elector, on the Democratic ticket; in 1867, was nominated for Governor by the Conservatives, was not willing to make an active canvass, and declined; was then put in the field as candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, made the race, but was unsuccessful. He resided at Maysville almost throughout his long legal career, and died suddenly, November 28, 1876, at his hotel in Brookville, Bracken County, where he was attending court. He was an able lawyer, too generous to be successful in accumulating money; an open, big-hearted, noble-spirited, useful man, who died universally regretted and respected. During the great civil war, he was decidedly a Union man, and cast all his influence, during that stormy period in the Legislature, against the secession of the State, and in favor of an undivided country; and, at home, was the friend of peace. Mr. Taylor was married, in 1840, to Miss Charlotte J. Duke, daughter of Dr. Basil Duke, late of Mason County, and sister of Dr. John M. Duke, of Maysville. Her mother was the daughter of Col. Thomas Marshall, of Virginia, and sister of Chief-Justice John Marshall. They had six children, five of whom, with their mother, survive him.