

Biographies of western delegates who attended the 1861 Virginia Secession Convention were transcribed by undergraduate students enrolled in Dr. Billy Joe Peyton's Fall 2010 "Introduction to Public History" class at West Virginia State University.

By James Bailes

George W. Berlin, of Upshur County (now in West Virginia), was born in Pennsylvania about 1823. By 1850 he had settled in Lewis County, then part of Virginia, and had begun the practice of law there. When the county was divided to form Upshur County in 1851, he became commonwealth's attorney of the new county.

He was the delegate from Upshur County to the State Convention of 1861. Berlin had been elected as a Unionist, and he voted against secession both on April 4 and on April 17. However, on April 23, he changed his vote to "aye" and, as a supporter of the Confederate cause, spent the war years in eastern Virginia.

Sources: W.G. Tetrick (ed.), *Census Returns of Lewis County... For 1850* (Clarksburg, W.Va, 1930), p. 21; Cutright, *History of Upshur County*, pp. 244, 246