

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 Gary Blackhurst

WILLIAM GUY BROWN, of Preston County (now in West Virginia), was born September 25, 1800, in Kingwood, then in Monongalia County (now in West Virginia), and was the son of James Brown, a native of Scotland. He was a lawyer and practiced in Kingwood. He was for several years commonwealth's attorney of Preston County, which was formed from Monongalia County in 1818, and he represented the county in the Virginia House of Delegates during the 1832-1833 session and again from 1840 to 1843. He was then elected to the federal House of Representatives and served there from 1845 to 1849. Brown was also a member of the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1850-1851.

He was elected to the State Convention from Preston County and was a member of the Committee on Elections. He voted against secession on April 4 and again on April 17. Brown continued to oppose secession after his return home, and because of this activity and because of his advocacy of separate statehood for western Virginia, was expelled by the Richmond Convention in June, 1861. He was then elected to Congress from "loyal" Virginia, and served in the House of Representatives from 1861 to 1863. After the establishment of the state of West Virginia, Brown was elected as a congressman from the new state and served from 1863 to 1865. He was a member of the West Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1872, and of the West Virginia House of Delegates from 1872 to 1873. He died on April 19, 1884, in Kingwood.

SOURCES: BDAC, p.611; Ency. Va. Biog., III, 112-113; PMWV, p.235.