

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 John Morrison

CAMPBELL TARR, of Brooke County (now in West Virginia), was born on January 8, 1819, at Wellsburg, Brooke County, and was the son of William Tarr and Mary Perry Tarr. He was educated in local schools and as a boy worked in his father's dry goods store in Wellsburg. He inherited the family business and became, in his turn, a prosperous merchant. Tarr was an active supporter of the Democratic party, but before the secession convention he held no public office. He was married three times: to Mary Hammond, to her sister Nancy Hammond, and to Mrs. Mary Beninghaus, a widow, and he had five children by his three wives.

He was delegate from Brooke County to the Convention and was elected as a Unionist. He voted consistently against all proposals for secession and was expelled from the Virginia Convention because of his continued opposition to secession.

Tarr was a member of the Restored Government (or Wheeling) Convention. He was first treasurer of West Virginia and served from 1863 to 1867. After the war, he became interested in the development of lands in Kansas and Iowa, and he played a prominent part in the establishment of the town of Sabetha, Kansas. He died there on December 22, 1879.

Source: PMWV, pp. 585-591.