

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 Stacy Bloss

ALLEN TAYLOR CAPERTON, OF Monroe County (now in West Virginia), was born November 21, 1810, near Union, Monroe County, and was a son of Hugh Caperton. He was educated at the University of Virginia and at Yale. He became a lawyer and practiced in Monroe County. He married Harriet Echols in 1832.

Caperton was a member of the House of Delegates during the 1841-1842 session. He was then elected to the Virginia Senate and served from 1844 to 1848. Caperton was a member of the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1850-1851, and was again a member of the House of Delegates from 1857 to 1861. He was interested in internal improvements and was a director of the James River and Kanawha Company.

Caperton was a delegate from Monroe County to the State Convention, and was a member of the Committee on Elections. Having been elected as a Unionist, he voted against secession on April 4, but he voted for secession on April 17. Early in 1863, he was elected to the Confederate Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the death of WILLIAM BALLARD PRESTON, and served in that body until it adjourned for the last time on March 18, 1865.

After the war he returned to Monroe County, which had become part of the new state of West Virginia, and was active in promoting the region's coal, iron, and timber resources. In 1875 he was elected as United State Senator from West Virginia, and he served until his death in Washington, D.C., on July 26, 1876.

Sources: *Ency. Va. Biog.*, III, 39; *BDAC*, p. 660; *PMWV*, pp. 268-269; *RGA*, p. 356.