

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 Brandon Shuping

NAPOLEON B. FRENCH, of Mercer County (now in West Virginia), was born in Giles County about 1820, and was the son of David French, clerk of the county. He was a farmer and a justice of the peace of Mercer County, which was formed from Giles County in 1837. He was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from 1855 to 1856 and a member of the Virginia Senate from 1857 to 1861.

He represented Mercer County in the Convention and voted against secession on April 7. During the war he commanded a company of cavalry in the Confederate army. He died in Princeton, Mercer County, about 1898.

Sources: Bassett French Papers; *RGA*, p. 375; David E. Johnston, *A History of Middle New River Settlements* (Huntington, W. Va., 1906), pp. 153, 180; *Justices*, Reg. 7.