

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

BENJAMIN WILSON, of Harrison County (now in West Virginia), was born at Wilsonburg, Harrison County, on April 30, 1825, and he was educated at the Northwestern Virginia Academy in Clarksburg. He was a lawyer and practiced in Clarksburg, the seat of Harrison County. He was commonwealth's attorney of the county from 1852 to 1860.

As delegate from Harrison County to the State Convention, he voted against secession on April 4, and he abstained from voting on April 17. After the war he returned to Clarksburg and resumed the practice of law. He was a member of the West Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1872 and was elected to Congress the same year. He served in the House of Representatives from 1873 until 1883 and was assistant attorney general of the United States from 1885 until 1889. He died in Clarksburg on April 26, 1901.

Sources: *BDAC*, p. 1828; *PMWV*, pp. 338-339.