

A SESQUICENTENNIAL ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ MOMENT

DEC. 28, 1862-JAN. 3, 1863

On Dec. 31, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the bill that gave birth to the new state of West Virginia.

It was a controversial decision that scholars continue to debate to this day, mainly because the petition for statehood was approved by the government representing the territory that would become West Virginia and not the territory that would remain Virginia.

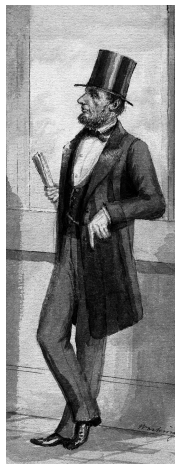
Lincoln recognized the questionable nature of the state's creation, noting that "a measure made expedient by a war, is no precedent for times of peace."

But he said he signed the bill because he could not afford to lose the support of loyal West Virginians.

"Her brave and good men regard her admission into the Union as a matter of life and

death," the president said in his written opinion. "They have been true to the Union under very severe trials. We have so acted as to justify their hopes; and we cannot fully retain their confidence, and co-operation, if we seem to break faith with them."

This sesquicentennial moment is brought to you by the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Archives and History Section.



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