

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

MAY 11 - 17, 1862

ACTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

On May 13, 1862, the Reorganized Government of Virginia gave its blessing to dividing Virginia into two states with separate governments.

It was the first official step in a long and arduous process toward establishing West Virginia as the country's 35th state. It also was the result of a clever move.

West Virginia statehood leaders had to obtain permission from the state of Virginia to create a new state to satisfy a constitutional restriction regarding such moves. By establishing the Reorganized Government of Virginia as the recognized government of Virginia, though, statehood proponents were able to seek consent from this pro-Union body instead of

the Confederate Virginia government in Richmond. Even so, it would take seven months for lawmakers to draft a proposal for creating a new state that would meet the approval of the people of western Virginia, the U.S. Congress and President Abraham Lincoln.

One of the most contentious issues on which to reach consensus was the question of slavery. Once that issue was settled, the revised proposal was returned to the West Virginia statehood leaders for their consideration.

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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