

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

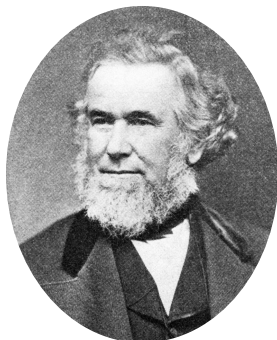
NOV. 30 - DEC. 6, 1862

As the ravages of war continued to rob many Virginians of their homes, food and loved ones in the winter of 1862, Gov. Frances H. Pierpont tried to persuade lawmakers to bring an end to the fighting by supporting the abolition of slavery.

Pierpont made his plea as part of his Dec. 4, 1862, state-of-the-state address, which came several weeks after President Lincoln warned the Confederacy that it had until Jan. 1, 1863, to return to the Union or forfeit its slaves.

The historical significance of the moment was not lost on Pierpont.

“It is our duty as American citizens, the guardians of the liberties purchased by our forefathers and transmitted to



*Gov. Frances H. Pierpont*

us, to look this subject fairly in the face, and decide between republican liberty, and African, or any other kind of slavery,” Pierpont told lawmakers.

He concluded by saying: “If we succeed, have hearts and stout arms, elsewhere will be nerved to throw off the fetters that have so long bound them; if we fail, our failure will but serve to bind them more securely.”

*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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