

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

MARCH 1 – 7, 1863

Sides were being drawn in the weeks leading up to the vote over West Virginia's quest for statehood.

During the first week of March in 1863, citizens met in Fairmont, Pleasant Hill, Ravenswood, Slippery Ford and Wheeling to promote the interests of the new state while groups of southern supporters called Butternuts tried to sway public opinion against it in Triadelphia and other places.

The Butternuts argued that the statehood movement was unconstitutional and if approved, hoards of freed slaves would

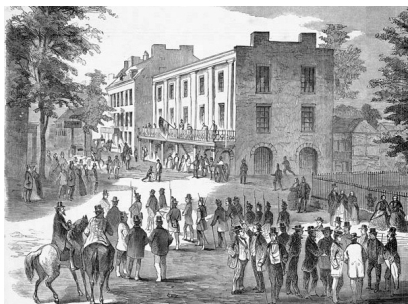
compete for jobs then held by white men and drive down wages from \$1.50 a day to 75 cents a day.

“We look upon the effort to place the African upon an equality with the white man in Western Virginia as vain and foolish,” according to a resolution the Butternuts adopted.

The *Wheeling Intelligencer* predicted that the Butternuts' efforts would “turn out to be a very diminutive farce on

Election Day. It will never know what hurt it.”

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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