

A SESQUICENTENNIAL MOMENT



Nov. 24-30, 1861

Nov. 26, 1861, was the beginning of the long and often arduous process of drafting a Constitution for the new state of West Virginia.

Some of the more contentious issues revolved around the questions of slavery, the new state's boundaries and what to name it.

Throughout the effort, many people continued to question the legality of the new state since permission to form it came from the Restored Government of Virginia, which only represented the western counties of Virginia.

Those questions of legitimacy were bolstered by the fact that people in some regions of the new state supported the Confederacy and did not recognize Wheeling as their seat of government until after the war.

Ultimately, a Supreme Court decision sanctioned the state on the basis that Richmond forfeited its rights to the whole state when it chose to leave the Union.

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

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