A Sesquicentennial

APRIL 20-26, 1863 On April 20, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the proclamation that created West Virginia.

The quest to become the nation's 35th state had been years in the making as friction between the eastern and western portions of Virginia grew over geographic and economic differences as well as conflicting views on taxation, representation and internal improvements.

Though Lincoln favored the cause that West Virginia represented, he grappled with whether it was constitutional to create a new state from another state that was in rebellion. He also was concerned about whether the people of the new state would embrace or abolish slavery. Lincoln's closest advisers were divided on the constitutional question. After much delib-

eration, Lincoln agreed to create West Virginia with the stipulation that the people of the new state must agree to the gradual emancipation of slaves in the state, which they did by a vote of 28,321 to 572.

Lincoln's proclamation took effect in 60 days, on June 20, 1863.

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.

