

DEC. 7-13, 1862

After months of contentious debate, the U.S. House of Representatives finally passed West Virginia's statehood bill on Dec. 10, 1862.

The vote was 96-55, and came five months after the U.S. Senate approved the measure by a vote of 23-17.

S.B. 365 would now go to President Abraham Lincoln for his consideration.

A compromise on the question of slavery helped garner enough support in both houses for West Virginia to become the nation's 35th state.

The Willey Amendment stipulated that no person born in the new state after July 4, 1863, would be a slave; that all slaves



within the state under the age of 10 would be free when they turned 21; and that all slaves between the ages of 10 and 21 would be free upon reaching the age of 25.

In expressing support for the measure, U.S. Rep. John William Noell, D-Missouri, said, "... it is our duty to relieve that people from the condition in which they are placed."

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.

For more information, visit www.wvculture.org