

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

MARCH 22 – 28, 1863

On March 26, 1863, voters in western Virginia ratified a revised constitution for the new state by a vote of 28,321 to 572.

The revised constitution that voters approved included the Willey Amendment, a compromise on the question of emancipation. That amendment decreed that children born to slaves after July 4, 1863, would be free from birth, slaves who were 10 or younger would be free when they reached the age of 21 and slaves between the ages of 10 and 21 would be free when they turned 25.

West Virginia's statehood movement survived opposition from both within and outside the new state's borders. But as historian George E. Moore noted, "the

loyal men of West Virginia took comfort from the fact that their devotion to a cause had placed in the American flag a new star - there to bear witness for the Constitution and the Union."

It would be nearly another month before President Abraham Lincoln would issue a proclamation declaring that in 60 days, West Virginia would become the 35th state in the Union.

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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