

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

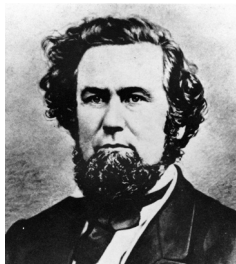
Nov. 3-9, 1861

“His Excellency... said that when these stars and stripes are stricken down, free government is gone forever. He urged the men to carry the flag before them, and whenever you find a man opposing it let him feel the steel of your saber bayonets and the leaden bullets in your rifles’ breeches, although it may be brother fighting against brother.”

Those words, from an early November 1861 story in the *Wheeling Intelligencer*, describe a ceremony where Restored State of Virginia Gov. Francis H. Pierpont presented a flag and weapons to the First (West) Virginia Regiment.

The ceremony served as a reminder of how necessary Union military presence was for the creation of West Virginia.

Without the Union Army occupation, loyalists in the northwest could not have



organized a new Virginia government.

Virginia’s Confederate government in Richmond also could have ignored the statehood movement if not for loyal politicians like Pierpont and others in Wheeling.

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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