A Sesquicentennial Moment

March 9 – 15, 1862

Acting on a call from Confederate President Jefferson Davis for 40,000 additional troops from Virginia, Gov. John Letcher ordered county militia to rendezvous at points throughout Virginia.

"No call like this has ever been made upon this State in vain," the governor said in his March 10 proclamation. "Every nerve must be strung. Every son of Virginia must respond with an ardent zeal to defend the Commonwealth."

Letcher said brave men and true patriots must "leave their homes and grapple sternly with the foe. We will not tamely submit to degradation or slavery. We will have Virginia independent and all our liberties maintained, or perish in the attempt to secure them."

Letcher also encouraged loyal citizens of the west and northwest to form guerrilla companies and strike when least expected "for the State that gave them birth."

He ended his proclamation with the following challenge: "Scorn the misrule of traitors, who, with usurped authority, are desecrating our soil with a pollution worse than that of the direst enemy, and execute vengeance upon the foe who ack[n]owledges and sustains their treason."

Staunton Spectator.

All the Militia Called Out!

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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