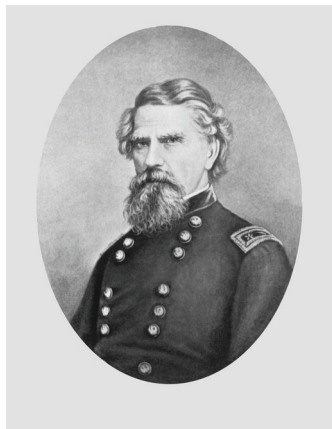


A SESQUICENTENNIAL MOMENT

JUNE 1 - 7, 1862



The threat of sabotage drove U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Benjamin F. Kelley to order all employees of the Baltimore & Ohio and Northwestern Virginia Railroads and Adams Express Co. to swear loyalty to the Union during the summer of 1862.

Anyone who refused the June 5 order from the commander of the Railroad District would be fired.

Kelley was concerned that disloyal employees might try to damage or destroy the rail service, which was critical to the movement of troops and supplies.

Besides swearing allegiance to the United States of America, conductors and other railroad workers had to vow not to help the Confederacy in any way. Two days after Kelley issued his order, a captain who was an acting provost marshal commenced swearing all employees. Certified copies of those oaths were filed with headquarters.

“We have as yet heard of none who refused to take the oath.”

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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