

= Confederate government of Kentucky =

The Confederate government of Kentucky was a shadow government established for the Commonwealth of Kentucky by a self @-@ constituted group of Confederate sympathizers during the American Civil War . The shadow government never replaced the elected government in Frankfort , which had strong Union sympathies . Neither was it able to gain the whole support of Kentucky 's citizens ; its jurisdiction extended only as far as Confederate battle lines in the Commonwealth . Nevertheless , the provisional government was recognized by the Confederate States of America , and Kentucky was admitted to the Confederacy on December 10 , 1861 . Kentucky was represented by the central star on the Confederate battle flag .

Bowling Green was designated the Confederate capital of Kentucky . Due to the military situation in the state , the provisional government was exiled and traveled with the Army of Tennessee for most of its existence . For a short time in the autumn of 1862 , the Confederate Army controlled Frankfort , the only time a Union capital was captured by Confederate forces . During this occupation , General Braxton Bragg attempted to install the provisional government as the permanent authority in the Commonwealth . However , Union General Don Carlos Buell ambushed the inauguration ceremony and drove the provisional government from the state for the final time . From that point forward , the government existed primarily on paper and was dissolved at the end of the war .

The provisional government elected two governors . George W. Johnson was elected at the Russellville Convention and served until his death at the Battle of Shiloh . Richard Hawes was elected to replace Johnson and served through the remainder of the war .

= = Background = =

Kentucky 's citizens were split regarding the issues central to the Civil War . The state had strong economic ties with Ohio River cities such as Pittsburgh and Cincinnati while at the same time sharing many cultural , social , and economic links with the South . Unionist traditions were strong throughout the Commonwealth 's history , especially in the east . With economic ties to both the North and the South , Kentucky had little to gain and much to lose from a war between the states . Additionally , many slaveholders felt that the best protection for slavery was within the Union .

The presidential election of 1860 showed Kentucky 's mixed sentiments when the state gave John Bell 45 % of the popular vote , John C. Breckinridge 36 % , Stephen Douglas 18 % , and Abraham Lincoln less than 1 % . Historian Allan Nevins interpreted the election results to mean that Kentuckians strongly opposed both secession and coercion against the secessionists . The majority coalition of Bell and Douglas supporters was seen as a solid moderate Unionist position that opposed precipitate action by extremists on either side .

The majority of Kentucky 's citizens believed the state should be a mediator between the North and South . On December 9 , 1860 , Kentucky Governor Beriah Magoffin sent a letter to the other slave state governors , suggesting that they come to an agreement with the North that would include strict enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act , a division of common territories at the 37th parallel , a guarantee of free use of the Mississippi River , and a Southern veto over slave legislation . Magoffin proposed a conference of slave states , followed by a conference of all the states to secure the concessions . Because of the escalating pace of events , neither conference was held .

Governor Magoffin called a special session of the Kentucky General Assembly on December 27 , 1860 , to ask the legislators for a convention to decide the Commonwealth 's course in the sectional conflict . The Louisville Morning Courier on January 25 , 1861 articulated the position that the secessionists faced in the legislature , " Too much time has already been wasted . The historic moment once past , never returns . For us and for Kentucky , the time to act is NOW OR NEVER . " The Unionists , on the other hand , were unwilling to surrender the fate of the state to a convention that might " in a moment of excitement , adopt the extreme remedy of secession . " The Unionist position carried after many of the states rights ' legislators , opposing the idea of immediate secession , voted against the convention . The assembly did , however , send six delegates to a February 4 Peace Conference in Washington , D.C. , and asked Congress to call a national

convention to consider potential resolutions to the secession crisis , including the Crittenden Compromise , proposed by Kentuckian John J. Crittenden .

As a result of the firing on Fort Sumter , President Lincoln sent a telegram to Governor Magoffin requesting that the Commonwealth supply four regiments as its share of the overall request of 75 @, @ 000 troops for the war . Magoffin , a Confederate sympathizer , replied , " President Lincoln , Washington , D.C. I will send not a man nor a dollar for the wicked purpose of subduing my sister Southern states . B. Magoffin " Both houses of the General Assembly met on May 7 and passed declarations of neutrality in the war , a position officially declared by Governor Magoffin on May 20 .

In a special congressional election held June 20 , Unionist candidates won nine of Kentucky 's ten congressional seats . Confederate sympathizers won only the Jackson Purchase region , which was economically linked to Tennessee by the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers . Believing defeat at the polls was certain , many Southern Rightists had boycotted the election ; of the 125 @, @ 000 votes cast , Unionists captured close to 90 @, @ 000 . Confederate sympathizers were dealt a further blow in the August 5 election for state legislators . This election resulted in veto @-@ proof Unionist majorities of 76 ? 24 in the House and 27 ? 11 in the Senate . From then on , most of Magoffin 's vetoes to protect southern interests were overridden in the General Assembly .

Historian Wilson Porter Shortridge made the following analysis :

With secession no longer considered a viable option , the pro @-@ Confederate forces became the strongest supporters for neutrality . Unionists dismissed this as a front for a secessionist agenda . Unionists , on the other hand , struggled to find a way to move the large , moderate middle to a " definite and unqualified stand with the Washington government . " The maneuvering between the two reached a decisive point on September 3 when Confederate forces were ordered from Tennessee to the Kentucky towns of Hickman and Columbus . Union forces responded by occupying Paducah .

On September 11 , the legislature passed a resolution instructing Magoffin to order the Confederate forces (but not the Union forces) to leave the state . The Governor vetoed the resolution , but the General Assembly overrode his veto , and Magoffin gave the order . The next week , the assembly officially requested the assistance of the Union and asked the governor to call out the state militia to join the Federal forces . Magoffin also vetoed this request . Again the assembly overrode his veto and Magoffin acquiesced .

= = Formation = =

A pro @-@ Confederate peace meeting , with Breckinridge as a speaker , was scheduled for September 21 . Unionists feared the meeting would lead to actual military resistance , and dispatched troops from Camp Dick Robinson to disband the meeting and arrest Breckinridge . Breckinridge , as well as many other state leaders identified with the secessionists , fled the state . These leaders eventually served as the nucleus for a group that would create a shadow government for Kentucky . In his October 8 " Address to the People of Kentucky , " Breckinridge declared , " The United States no longer exists . The Union is dissolved . "

On October 29 , 1861 , 63 delegates representing 34 counties met at Russellville to discuss the formation of a Confederate government for the Commonwealth . Despite its defeats at the polls , this group believed that the Unionist government in Frankfort did not represent the will of the majority of Kentucky 's citizens . Trigg County 's Henry Burnett was elected chairman of the proceedings . Scott County farmer George W. Johnson chaired the committee that wrote the convention 's final report and introduced some of its key resolutions . The report called for a sovereignty convention to sever ties with the Federal government . Both Breckinridge and Johnson served on the Committee of Ten that arranged the convention .

On November 18 , 116 delegates from 68 counties met at the William Forst House in Russellville . Burnett was elected presiding officer . Fearing for the safety of the delegates , he first proposed postponing proceedings until January 8 , 1862 . Johnson convinced the majority of the delegates to continue . By the third day , the military situation was so tenuous that the entire convention had to be moved to a tower on the campus of Bethel Female College , a now @-@ defunct institution in

Hopkinsville .

The first item was ratification of an ordinance of secession , which proceeded in short order . Next , being unable to flesh out a complete constitution and system of laws , the delegates voted that " the Constitution and laws of Kentucky , not inconsistent with the acts of this Convention , and the establishment of this Government , and the laws which may be enacted by the Governor and Council , shall be the laws of this state . " The delegates proposed a provisional government to consist of a legislative council of ten members (one from each Kentucky congressional district) ; a governor , who had the power to appoint judicial and other officials ; a treasurer ; and an auditor . The delegates designated Bowling Green (then under the control of Confederate general Albert Sidney Johnston) as the Confederate State capital , but had the foresight to provide for the government to meet anywhere deemed appropriate by the council and governor . The convention adopted a new state seal , an arm wearing mail with a star , extended from a circle of twelve other stars .

The convention unanimously elected Johnson as governor . Horatio F. Simrall was elected lieutenant governor , but soon fled to Mississippi to escape Federal authorities . Robert McKee , who had served as secretary of both conventions , was appointed secretary of state . Theodore Legrand Burnett was elected treasurer , but resigned on December 17 to accept a position in the Confederate Congress . He was replaced by Warren County native John Quincy Burnham . The position of auditor was first offered to former Congressman Richard Hawes , but Hawes declined to continue his military service under Humphrey Marshall . In his stead , the convention elected Josiah Pillsbury , also of Warren County . The legislative council elected Willis Benson Machen as its president .

On November 21 , the day following the convention , Johnson wrote Confederate president Jefferson Davis to request Kentucky 's admission to the Confederacy . Burnett , William Preston , and William E. Simms were chosen as the state 's commissioners to the Confederacy . For reasons unexplained by the delegates , Dr. Luke P. Blackburn , a native Kentuckian living in Mississippi , was invited to accompany the commissioners to Richmond , Virginia . Though Davis had reservations about circumvention of the elected General Assembly in forming the Confederate government , he concluded that Johnson 's request had merit , and on November 25 , recommended Kentucky for admission to the Confederacy . Kentucky was admitted to the Confederacy on December 10 , 1861 .

= = Activity = =

On November 26 , 1861 , Governor Johnson issued an address to the citizens of the Commonwealth blaming abolitionists for the breakup of the United States . He asserted his belief that the Union and Confederacy were forces of equal strength , and that the only solution to the war was a free trade agreement between the two sovereign nations . He further announced his willingness to resign as provisional governor if the Kentucky General Assembly would agree to cooperate with Governor Magoffin . Magoffin himself denounced the Russellville Convention and the provisional government , stressing the need to abide by the will of the majority of the Commonwealth 's citizens .

During the winter of 1861 , Johnson tried to assert the legitimacy of the fledgling government but its jurisdiction extended only as far as the area controlled by the Confederate Army . Johnson came short of raising the 46 @, @ 000 troops requested by the Confederate Congress . Efforts to levy taxes and to compel citizens to turn over their guns to the government were similarly unsuccessful . On January 3 , 1862 , Johnson requested a sum of \$ 3 million (\$ 71 million as of 2016) from the Confederate Congress to meet the provisional government 's operating expenses . The Congress instead approved a sum of \$ 2 million , the expenditure of which required approval of Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin and President Davis . Much of the provisional government 's operating capital was probably provided by Kentucky congressman Eli Metcalfe Bruce , who made a fortune from varied economic activities throughout the war .

The council met on December 14 to appoint representatives to the Confederacy 's unicameral

provisional congress . Those appointed would serve for only two months , as the provisional congress was replaced with a permanent bicameral legislature on February 17 , 1862 . Kentucky was entitled to two senators and 12 representatives in the permanent Confederate Congress . The usual day for general elections being passed , Governor Johnson and the legislative council set election day for Confederate Kentucky on January 22 . Voters were allowed to vote in whichever county they occupied on election day , and could cast a general ballot for all positions . In an election that saw military votes outnumber civilian ones , only four of the provisional legislators were elected to seats in the Confederate House of Representatives . One provisional legislator , Henry Burnett , was elected to the Confederate Senate .

The provisional government took other minor actions during the winter of 1861 . An act was passed to rename Wayne County to Zollicoffer County in honor of Felix Zollicoffer , who died at the Battle of Mill Springs . Local officials were appointed in areas controlled by Confederate forces , including many justices of the peace . When the Confederate government eventually disbanded , the legality of marriages performed by these justices was questioned , but eventually upheld .

= = = Withdrawal from Kentucky and death of Governor Johnson = = =

Following Ulysses S. Grant 's victory at the Battle of Fort Henry , General Johnston withdrew from Bowling Green into Tennessee on February 7 , 1862 . A week later , Governor Johnson and the provisional government followed . On March 12 , the New Orleans Picayune reported that " the capital of Kentucky [is] now being located in a Sibley tent . "

Governor Johnson , despite his presumptive official position , his age (50) , and a crippled arm , volunteered to serve under General John C. Breckinridge and Colonel Robert P. Trabue at the Battle of Shiloh . On April 7 , Johnson was severely wounded in the thigh and abdomen , and lay on the battlefield until the following day . Johnson was recognized by acquaintance and fellow Freemason , Alexander McDowell McCook , a Union general . Johnson died aboard the Union hospital ship Hannibal , and the provisional government of Kentucky was left leaderless .

= = = Richard Hawes as governor = = =

Prior to abandoning Bowling Green , Governor Johnson requested that Richard Hawes come to the city and help with the administration of the government , but Hawes was delayed due to a bout with typhoid fever . Following Johnson 's death , the provisional government elected Hawes , who was still recovering from his illness , as governor . Following his recovery , Hawes joined the government in Corinth , Mississippi , and took the oath of office on May 31 .

During the summer of 1862 , word began to spread through the Army of Tennessee that Generals Bragg and Edmund Kirby Smith were planning an invasion of Kentucky . The legislative council voted to endorse the invasion plan , and on August 27 , Governor Hawes was dispatched to Richmond to favorably recommend it to President Davis . Davis was non @-@ committal , but Bragg and Smith proceeded , nonetheless .

On August 30 , Smith commanded one of the most complete Confederate victories of the war against an inexperienced Union force at the Battle of Richmond . Bragg also won a decisive victory at the September 13 Battle of Munfordville , but the delay there cost him the larger prize of Louisville , which Don Carlos Buell moved to occupy on September 25 . Having lost Louisville , Bragg spread his troops into defensive postures in the central Kentucky cities of Bardstown , Shelbyville and Danville and waited for something to happen , a move that historian Kenneth W. Noe called a " stupendously illogical decision . "

Meanwhile , the leaders of Kentucky 's Confederate government had remained in Chattanooga , Tennessee , awaiting Governor Hawes ' return . They finally departed on September 18 , and caught up with Bragg and Smith in Lexington , Kentucky on October 2 . Bragg had been disappointed with the number of soldiers volunteering for Confederate service in Kentucky ; wagon loads of weapons that had been shipped to the Commonwealth to arm the expected enlistees remained unissued . Desiring to enforce the Confederate Conscription Act to boost recruitment ,

Bragg decided to install the provisional government in the recently captured state capital of Frankfort . On October 4 , 1862 , Hawes was inaugurated as governor by the Confederate legislative council . In the celebratory atmosphere of the inauguration ceremony , however , the Confederate forces let their guard down , and were ambushed and forced to retreat by Buell 's artillery .

= = Decline and dissolution = =

Following the Battle of Perryville , the provisional government left Kentucky for the final time . Displaced from their home state , members of the legislative council dispersed to places where they could make a living or be supported by relatives until Governor Hawes called them into session . Scant records show that on December 30 , 1862 , Hawes summoned the council , auditor , and treasurer to his location at Athens , Tennessee for a meeting on January 15 , 1863 . Hawes himself unsuccessfully lobbied President Davis to remove Hawes ' former superior , Humphrey Marshall , from command . On March 4 , Hawes told Davis by letter that " our cause is steadily on the increase " and assured him that another foray into the Commonwealth would produce better results than the first had .

The government 's financial woes also continued . Hawes was embarrassed to admit that neither he nor anyone else seemed to know what became of approximately \$ 45 @, @ 000 that had been sent from Columbus to Memphis , Tennessee during the Confederate occupation of Kentucky . Another major blow was Davis ' 1864 decision not to allow Hawes to spend \$ 1 million that had been secretly appropriated in August 1861 to help Kentucky maintain its neutrality . Davis reasoned that the money could not be spent for its intended purpose , since Kentucky had already been admitted to the Confederacy .

Late in the war , the provisional government existed mostly on paper . However , in the summer of 1864 , Colonel R. A. Alston of the Ninth Tennessee Cavalry requested Governor Hawes ' assistance in investigating crimes allegedly committed by Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan during his latest raid into Kentucky . Hawes never had to act on the request , however , as Morgan was suspended from command on August 10 and killed by Union troops on September 4 , 1864 .

There is no documentation detailing exactly when Kentucky 's provisional government ceased operation . It is assumed to have dissolved upon the conclusion of the Civil War .