

= Beriah Magoffin =

Beriah Magoffin ( April 18 , 1815 ? February 28 , 1885 ) was the 21st Governor of Kentucky , serving during the early part of the Civil War . Personally , Magoffin adhered to a states ' rights position , including the right of a state to secede from the Union , and he sympathized with the Confederate cause . Nevertheless , when the Kentucky General Assembly adopted a position of neutrality in the war , Magoffin ardently held to it , refusing calls for aid from both the Union and Confederate governments .

In special elections held in June 1861 , Unionists captured nine of Kentucky 's ten congressional seats and obtained two @-@ thirds majorities in both houses of the state legislature . Despite Magoffin 's strict adherence to the policy of neutrality , the Unionist legislature did not trust him and routinely overrode his vetoes . Unable to provide effective leadership due to a hostile legislature , Magoffin agreed to resign as governor in 1862 , provided he could choose his successor . Lieutenant governor Linn Boyd had died in office , and Magoffin refused to allow Speaker of the Senate John F. Fisk to succeed him as governor . Accordingly , Fisk resigned and the Kentucky Senate elected Magoffin 's choice , James F. Robinson , as speaker . Magoffin then resigned , Robinson ascended to the governorship , and Fisk was re @-@ elected as Speaker of the Senate .

After the war , he encouraged acceptance of the Union victory and passage of the Thirteenth Amendment . He died February 28 , 1885 . Magoffin County , Kentucky was named in his honor .

= = Early life = =

Beriah Magoffin was born on April 18 , 1815 in Harrodsburg , Kentucky . He was the son of Beriah and Jane ( McAfee ) Magoffin . His father was an immigrant from County Down , Ireland , and his mother was the daughter of Samuel McAfee , a prominent pioneer in early Kentucky .

Magoffin 's early education was obtained in the common schools of Harrodsburg . In 1835 , he graduated from Centre College in Danville , Kentucky , and in 1838 , he earned a law degree from Transylvania University in Lexington , Kentucky . Afterward , he moved to Jackson , Mississippi where he began his legal career . From 1838 to 1839 , he served as Reading Clerk for the Mississippi state senate .

Magoffin returned to Kentucky in 1839 due to an illness . He continued his legal practice in Harrodsburg , and was appointed police judge of Harrodsburg by Governor Robert P. Letcher in 1840 . On April 21 , 1840 , he married Anna Nelson Shelby . Shelby was the granddaughter of Kentucky 's first and fifth governor , Isaac Shelby . Ten of the couple 's children survived infancy .

Magoffin became active in the Democratic Party , serving as a presidential elector in 1844 , 1848 , 1852 , and 1856 and as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1848 , 1856 , 1860 , and 1872 . He served one term in the Kentucky Senate in 1850 , but declined his party 's nomination for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1851 . In 1855 was the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor , running on a ticket with Beverly L. Clarke , who was defeated by Know Nothing candidate Charles S. Morehead .

= = Governor of Kentucky = =

Magoffin was elected governor of Kentucky by a vote of 76 @,@ 187 to 67 @,@ 283 over Joshua Fry Bell , taking office on August 30 , 1859 . He supported states ' rights and the institution of slavery . Although he believed in the right of states to secede from the union , he hoped to avoid this outcome by reaching an agreement between the southern and northern states . To that end , he wrote a circular letter to the governors of the slave states on December 9 , 1860 detailing a plan to save the Union .

Magoffin 's plan was to unite the slave states around a set of minimum concessions to see if the North would accept them as an alternative to war . The concessions included a constitutional amendment repealing any state law that interfered with enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act , passage of amendments to the Fugitive Slave Act ensuring that any state that would not return a

fugitive slave or obstructed a slave 's return would compensate the owner of the slave , passage of a law requiring extradition of anyone indicted by a grand jury for enticing the escape of a slave , passage of an amendment to the constitution guaranteeing slavery in all current and future territories south of 36 degrees north latitude , passage of an amendment to the constitution guaranteeing all states the right of using the Mississippi River , and provide protection for southern states in the U.S. Senate from oppressive slavery legislation . After the slave state governors refused Magoffin 's plan , he endorsed the Crittenden Compromise , authored by fellow Kentuckian John J. Crittenden .

In January 1861 , Magoffin called the state legislature into special session and asked them to call a convention to determine Kentucky 's course in the Civil War . The Unionist majority in the legislature feared that the vote of the convention would be to take Kentucky out of the Union ; consequently , they refused to call the convention . In response to President Abraham Lincoln 's call for troops on April 15 , 1861 , Magoffin defiantly declared by telegram , " I will send not a man nor a dollar for the wicked purpose of subduing my sister Southern States . " Encouraged by Magoffin 's rebuff of Lincoln , Confederate Secretary of War LeRoy Pope Walker requested Kentucky troops for the southern cause a week later , but Magoffin similarly refused him .

Magoffin called another special session of the legislature in May 1861 . Again , the legislators refused to call a convention to determine the state 's course in the war . Instead , they approved a resolution of neutrality , and Magoffin proclaimed this position on May 20 , 1861 . Later that month , Magoffin sent a letter to Confederate President Jefferson Davis asking that he recognize and honor Kentucky 's neutrality . In August , he sent an identical letter to President Lincoln .

Although Magoffin pledged " to abide by the will of the majority of the people in the state " and to uphold the state and federal constitutions , Unionists in the legislature did not trust Magoffin . In the state 's special elections in June 1861 , Unionist candidates swept nine of Kentucky 's ten congressional districts and obtained two @-@ thirds majorities in both houses of the General Assembly . From then on , they routinely overrode Magoffin 's vetoes .

In early September 1861 , both federal and Confederate troops entered Kentucky . Magoffin declared both sides equally guilty of violating Kentucky 's neutrality and demanded that both sides withdraw . A resolution calling for immediate withdrawal by both Union and Confederate forces was defeated in the legislature . Instead , the legislature passed a resolution ordering only the Confederate troops out of the state . Magoffin vetoed the resolution , but his veto was overridden , and he obediently issued the order for the Confederates to withdraw . In November 1861 , a self @-@ constituted convention of southern sympathizers met at Russellville , Kentucky in order to form a provisional Confederate government for the state . Despite his southern sympathies , Magoffin denounced the actions of this convention .

Magoffin and the legislature continued to clash throughout the remainder of 1861 and into 1862 . They found agreement only on the most menial of legislation , such as a bill to allow the common schools to continue the sessions that had been interrupted by the outbreak of hostilities in 1861 . He found particularly onerous a bill forfeiting the citizenship of anyone who fought for or aided the Confederacy , but in March 1862 , his veto of the bill was overridden . Magoffin also opposed the military rule of Brigadier General Jeremiah T. Boyle , who he believed was violating the civil rights of states ' rights advocates , even if they did not advocate secession .

Calls by the legislature for Magoffin 's resignation had begun as early as September 30 , 1861 . On August 16 , 1862 , Magoffin declared his willingness to resign on the condition that he be allowed to choose his successor . Because Lieutenant Governor Linn Boyd had died in office in 1859 , Speaker of the Senate John F. Fisk was next in line for the governorship . Magoffin refused to accept Fisk as his successor , so Fisk resigned as speaker and the senate elevated Magoffin 's choice , James F. Robinson , to speaker . Magoffin resigned as governor on August 18 , 1862 , and Robinson assumed the office of governor for the remainder of Magoffin 's term .

= = Later life and death = =

After the war , Magoffin returned to his legal practice and engaged in agricultural pursuits in

Harrodsburg . A series of land speculation ventures near Chicago , Illinois made him very wealthy . He encouraged his fellow Kentuckians to accept the results of the war . He advocated for civil rights for blacks and urged passage of the Thirteenth Amendment .

In his last act of public service , Magoffin represented Mercer County in the Kentucky House of Representatives from 1867 to 1869 . He died at home on February 28 , 1885 and was buried in Spring Hill Cemetery in Harrodsburg . In 1900 , a monument was erected in the cemetery in Magoffin 's honor . Magoffin County , Kentucky was created in 1860 and also named in his honor .