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CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: S.F. HALE AND GOV. BERIAH MAGOFFIN EXCHANGE

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CORRESPONDENCE, ETC.

[JANUARY 3(?), 1861.]

His Excellency A. B. MOORE, Governor of the State of Alabama:

Under the authority of the commission with which you honored me I repaired to the city of Frankfort, in the State of Kentucky, on the 26th day of December last. The Legislature of that State was not in session, and no extra session had then been called by the Governor, so that I had no opportunity of conferring with the legislative depart-meter of the group mont of the second s ment of the government. I was, however, most cordially received by the Governor, and immediately opened a consultation with His Excel-lency Beriah Magofin, the Governor of the State of Kentucky. The nature and result of that consultation is fully disclosed by the

The nature and result of that consultation is fully disclosed by the official correspondence between us, herewith submitted for your consideration. On the day after my arrival the Governor issued his proclamation convening the Legislature in extra session on the 17th day of January, "to take into consideration the interests of the Commonwealth, as the same may be involved in or connected with the present distracted condition of our common country." Receive assurances of the highest consideration and esteem of your fixed of your fixed officient convent.

friend and obedient servant,

S. F. HALE.

[Inclosure No. 1.]

FRANKFORT, December 27, 1860.

His Excellency B. MAGOFFIN, Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

I have the honor of placing in your hands herewith a commission from the Governor of the State of Alabama, accrediting me as a commissioner from that State to the sovereign State of Kentucky, to con-

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Kentucky native S.F. Hale returned to the Commonwealth as a secession commissioner from Alabama to try to get Kentucky to secede in December 1860 as the Southern states debated leaving the Union.

He wrote a persuasive letter to Gov. Beriah Magoffin and explained the threats that Lincoln posed to slavery, including servile insurrection, race war and political and social equality for African Americans.

Hale played on Kentucky's

slaveholding culture and hoped to convince the governor that Kentucky citizens needed protection from the federal government and Lincoln. The only way for them to keep their labor and livelihood would be for Kentucky to leave the union and join the other Southern states in what would become the Confederate States of America.

Magoffin, in his public letter, agreed with Hale that Lincoln was "dangerous." However, he argued that instead of secession, the Constitution and remaining in the Union better protected Kentucky slaveholders. It was a classic statement of Kentucky's proslavery loyalty.

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) links Kentuckians with their past via archival collections that document people from every walk of life, reaching back to 1509. The "Civil War Governors of Kentucky" (CWG-K) is a multi-year documentary-editing project dedicated to publishing documents associated with all five of the state's Civil War governors: the three Union governors, Beriah Magoffin (1859 – 1862), James F. Robinson (1862 – 1863), and Thomas E. Bramlette (1863 – 1867); and the two provisional Confederate governors, George W. Johnson (1861 – 1862) and Richard Hawes (1862 – 1865).

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