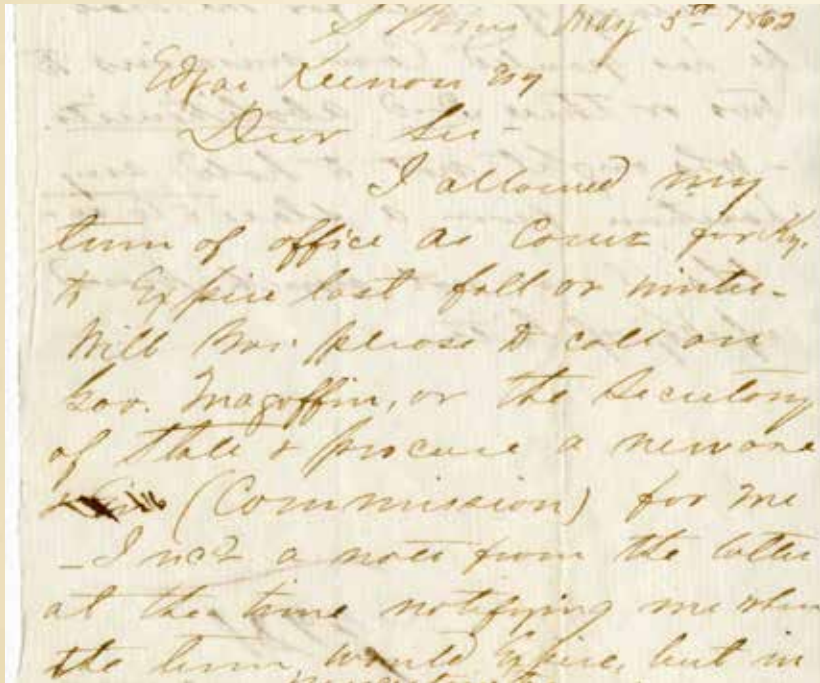


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CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: BASIL DUKE TO BERIAH MAGOFFIN



Kentucky Historical Society collections

On May 5, 1862, future Confederate Gen. Basil Duke, as yet not involved in the war and in business in St. Louis, wrote to Gov. Beriah Magoffin on a mundane piece of government business.

His postscript, though, reveals the tense political situation in the Border States where slavery and abolition lived side by side.

Duke wrote, "P.S. tell the Gov. or rather the secretary of state for me that he has granted Commissions to two or three D—d abolitionists. — who ought not to hold any position

from a slave state — tho. I am not much proud of Ky of late."

Duke's postscript highlights the conflicting emotions and uncertainty of Kentuckians during the war. While Duke does not advocate seceding from the Union, he is concerned that the governor is betraying Kentuckians by appointing abolitionists to leadership positions in Kentucky's military. Moreover, Duke's words showcase the ways in which changing notions of freedom influenced decisions on 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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