



### Confederate Governor Richard Hawes (1797-1877)

When Confederate armies invaded the Bluegrass State in the summer of 1862, they hoped to recruit Kentuckians and to secure the commonwealth for the Confederacy. To provide a political element to their invasion, the rebels inaugurated Richard Hawes as Confederate governor of Kentucky. As the ceremony was interrupted by cannon fire, it became one of the most unusual political events in Kentucky history.

Born in Bourbon County in 1797, Hawes attended Transylvania University, practiced law, and served in the state legislature and the U. S. Congress. Although Hawes first worked to secure the neutrality of Kentucky during the Civil War, he was a secessionist. In November 1861, he joined a convention at Russellville to form a pro-Confederate provisional state government. There, Hawes was elected lieutenant governor. Hawes became governor after George W. Johnson, Kentucky's first Confederate governor, was killed at the April 1862 Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee.

That summer, Hawes followed the Confederates into Kentucky. On October 3, Confederate general Braxton Bragg wrote that, "Tomorrow we inaugurate the civil Governor here, and transfer to him all [in] that department." Bragg hoped that the inauguration would show Kentuckians that a stable Confederate government had returned from exile, thereby leading to recruits. If volunteers failed to appear, Bragg wanted Hawes to enforce conscription laws. Federal troops, however, had other plans.

At noon on October 4, Confederate artillery fired a salute as Southern troops escorted Hawes through Frankfort. Upon reaching what is now the Old State Capitol, Hawes's inauguration began in the chamber of the House of Representatives. Bragg, Hawes, and others gave speeches, but the ceremony was quickly interrupted. Confederate colonel David Urquhart wrote that "the inaugural was being read when the booming of cannon . . . announced the near presence of the enemy." With Union troops approaching, Hawes "cut short his inaugural address" and the ball planned for that evening was cancelled.

The Confederate invasion of Kentucky ended after the Battle of Perryville. Hawes left the state with the Southern armies and his dream of a Confederate Kentucky was never realized. After the war he returned to Kentucky and served as a judge until his death in 1877.

The Old State Capitol, ca.1859  
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