October 28, 1861

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Oct. 28, 1861.

Earlier, in the autumn of that year, the seat of state government had to move from Jefferson City to Neosho, due to the capture of Jefferson City on June 11. On Oct. 28, lawmakers began debating a measure that asked Missouri to secede from the Union. In only two days’ time, the bill passed and was signed into law a day later.

However, what has become known as the Neosho Secession Ordinance is shrouded in mystery. What is unknown is whether federal or state law even allowed secession in that manner. Another point is which governor actually controlled the Show-Me State: Claiborne Fox Jackson, who was elected in 1860 — or Hamilton Gamble, who was the provisional — or military — governor, as installed by the Missouri State Convention in July of 1861.

A third piece to the mystery is whether or not the Legislature, under Gov. Jackson, even had enough members to take a vote on that day. Newspaper accounts claim a quorum was present, and votes taken. But a recently discovered House journal shows roll call votes were not taken in that body.

A month later, Missouri would be admitted into the confederate states.

October 28, 1861, the date marking the Legislature’s move toward secession from the Union, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Source: Documents from the Missouri Civil War Museum)