

# LINCOLN FREED SLAVES 50 YEARS AGO

## Semi-Centennial of Preliminary Proclamation Early in the Civil War.

### ALTOONA'S HISTORIC MEETING

Two Days After President's Act Governors of 14 Loyal States Met to Support Executive.

Special to The New York Times.

ALTOONA, Penn., Sept. 21.—Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, a half century ago on Sept. 22, 1862, issued his Proclamation of Emancipation, and just two days later Altoona, Penn., became the scene of the most important civic event of the civil war. It was the Altoona Conference of Loyal Governors. On Sept. 24 and 25 of that year, the Governors of fourteen loyal States of the North assembled in Altoona, held a conference in the old Logan House, and took such action as enabled President Lincoln to prosecute the war for the preservation of the Union.

On Sept. 26 the Governors visited Washington and presented Lincoln with an address, framed at the conference. It pledged him their personal and official confidence, suggested that he call upon them for additional volunteers for the army, and promised to give him constant support for the preservation of the Nation's life. Gov. Andrew Gregg Curtin of Pennsylvania conceived the conference in New York City.

A now grizzled and gray war veteran, who in his youth had answered the call for volunteers following the meeting, conceived the celebration of its semi-centennial anniversary. He is Capt. Joseph C. Long of Altoona, Penn.

The conference of the Governors had been forgotten generally. Fifty years ago the conference was held with barely a passing notice in the newspapers of that day, but later its effect became noticeable in the enlistment of new volunteers, the restoration of confidence of the people in Lincoln and the Government, and the march of the Union armies to victory.

Two years ago Capt. Long, just by chance, happened to note a small paragraph in one of the New York papers that made reference to the Altoona Conference of Loyal Governors. He planned an association for the perpetual commemoration of the event. It was launched, and from this Lincoln's Memorial Association, as it was titled, grew plans for the semi-centennial celebration of the conference. The celebration will take place Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of next week.

President Taft and the members of his Cabinet stamped the celebration of the anniversary of the conference with approval, as did Senators and Congressmen. Gov. John K. Tener of Pennsylvania approved of the proposed celebration and accepted the honor of being named Honorary Chairman of the General Committee on Arrangements. He and other State officials lent their every aid in the planning for a fitting celebration.

The little spark of patriotism that marked the beginning of the arrangements for commemorating the Altoona conference was soon fanned to a blaze. President Taft has promised to be in attendance on one day, the one on which memorial exercises will be conducted, Wednesday, the 25th. United States Senator Boies Penrose and numerous Congressmen of the country have accepted invitations to be present and participate in the event.

Gov. Tener and his staff will attend, as will many of the State dignitaries. Governors of other States are expected to attend, in response to invitations issued by Pennsylvania's Governor. The event will be one that will bring back the sons and daughters of Altoona who have gone to other cities and States, turning it into a "homecoming."

The programme for the celebration includes an official opening at noon Tuesday with the firing of the National salute, to be followed by a reception to visitors, an automobile parade, and a patriotic carnival held in a tented auditorium seating more than 10,000 people. The programme will be illustrative of the civil war days, and there will be several hundred people upon a stage some 300 feet in length and more than 100 feet in width.

The second day has been termed President's and Governor's Day. It will be the big day of the celebration, opening in the morning with a military and school parade, led by the United States Marine Band of Washington. The United States Army, the Union Army of 1862, the army that fought in the Spanish-American War will all be represented. The school pageant will be participated in by some 10,000 or more school children.

In the afternoon memorial exercises will be conducted at the tented auditorium, at which Gov. Tener will preside. President Edward Sparks of the State College will be the orator of the day and will deliver an address on "Abraham Lincoln."

Miss Frances Pierpont Siviter of Pittsburgh, granddaughter of Gov. F. H. Pierpont of Virginia, will read an original poem written for the occasion by her mother, Mrs. W. H. Siviter of Pittsburgh, and a daughter of Gov. Pierpont. Patriotic songs, including "Pennsylvania," will be sung by a chorus of 300 trained voices and to the accompaniment of a symphony orchestra of sixty members. In the evening the tent will be thrown open to the public.

On the third day of the celebration there will be a big civic and industrial parade, in which the Pennsylvania Railroad Company will enter possibly the greatest exhibit ever arranged, showing the progress of railroading in the last century. The celebration will end at night with a ball, and Altoona people hope that it will be the forerunner for a perpetual memorial for the famous Altoona Conference of War Governors.

The Altoona Conference of Governors was, next to the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln, the most decisive event of the civil war. It aroused the latent fires of the Union, brought discomfiture to those in the North who opposed the Union, taught the insurgent South that it must deal with the united North and that President Lincoln spoke in the voice of the Ameri-

can people. It gave new strength and hope to the soldiers in the field and made sure the Union cause would succeed. It was a noble, inestimable service, apt to be overlooked in the rush and roar of noisier events.

The conference was informal. There were no newspaper men present. There was no Secretary, and no minutes of the proceedings were recorded. It was held just two days after President Lincoln had issued the Proclamation of Emancipation.

Altoona was chosen as the meeting place, because it was central to those Governors that had accepted the invitation sent out by Govs. A. G. Curtin of Pennsylvania, David Tod of Ohio, and F. H. Pierpont of Virginia. It was held in the famous old Logan House. The Governors were in the city two days, Sept. 24 and 25, and on the following day presented their framed address to President Lincoln at the White House in Washington.

Andrew Gregg Curtin of Pennsylvania conceived the Altoona conference while in New York City early in the month of September, 1862, while in conversation with William H. Seward, Secretary of State, at the Astor House. It was the darkest hour of the war. The Army of the Potomac had been defeated in the seven days' battle in front of Richmond, and Pope had met with disaster on the plains of Manassas. The Union army had checked the South at Antietam, but seemed unable to gain any decisive vic-

tories. A sentiment of despair spread over the North, the people's confidence was wavering, and sympathizers with the Confederacy became hopeful for its success.

It was in this hour that Gov. Curtin, with a deeper insight into the public heart than any statesman of the time, saw that what the Government needed more than material aid was the moral reinforcement that would come as an expression of confidence from the Governors of the loyal States. There was impatience with President Lincoln in Massachusetts and Vermont, New York was indifferent, and a spirit of dissatisfaction seemed to prevail over the manner in which the Union army was being managed by Gen. McClellan.

On Sept. 6, 1862, Gov. Curtin presented the matter of a conference of the Governors of the loyal States to Gov. Andrew of Massachusetts. He approved the plan, and on Sept. 14 the invitations were dispatched by wire for a conference in Altoona on Sept. 24. In response to this call fourteen Governors assembled in the Logan House, and they were Curtin of Pennsylvania, Tod of Ohio, Pierpont of Virginia, Washburn of Maine, Andrew of Massachusetts, Sprague of Rhode Island, Buckingham of Connecticut, Burton of Delaware, Bradford of Maryland, Morton of Indiana, Yates of Illinois, Blair of Michigan, Solomon of Wisconsin, and Kirkwood of Iowa. Of these Governors, but one survives, William Sprague of Rhode Island.