Among the most important of Governor Andrew Curtin's official associations was that with President Abraham Lincoln. It does not appear that Curtin and Lincoln were close personal friends; their contacts were, for the most part, limited to political and military matters. Among the Loyal governors, Andrew Curtin is recognized as one of Lincoln's most active supporters. His political activity in behalf of the Lincoln administration was aimed at two powerful influences: the Northern governors and the Pennsylvania electorate.

As a "moderate" governor who agreed with most of the Lincoln administration policies, Andrew Curtin helped to modify the sentiments of the radical Northern governors who opposed Lincoln's civil policies. One of the most important acts of Curtin's Civil War career was the calling of the Altoona Conference of Loyal governors in September 1862. Curtin's purpose in calling the Altoona Conference was to bring the governors who were critical of the Lincoln administration into line, in order to enable Lincoln to move more decisively in prosecuting the War.

The idea of a conference of governors was not a new one in 1862. The Union governors in the states west of New England had met in May 1861 at Cleveland to discuss the administration's conduct of the War. The governors were distressed by the inefficiency and confusion

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1 For a discussion of Curtin's contacts with Lincoln on military matters, see Chapter IV, infra. Most accounts of meetings and correspondence between the two executives stress the cordiality and respect with which the men regarded each other, but little evidence of a close personal relationship can be found in Lincoln's papers, and the absence of any Curtin papers blocks any further investigation for such evidence. McClure's works stress his role as liaison between Lincoln and Curtin and imply that McClure was in more direct contact with Lincoln than was Curtin. The Lincoln papers contain references to Curtin chiefly in matters of military consequence.
of the War Department, and feared the influence of Secretary of State William H. Seward on Lincoln. Particularly concerned for the safety of the Border States, the state executives wanted Lincoln’s assurance that he would energetically pursue the War.² Present at the Cleveland meeting were Governors William Denison of Ohio, Oliver Morton of Indiana, A. W. Randall of Wisconsin, Austin Blair of Michigan, and Andrew Curtin, who delivered an “emotional” oration at the meeting. Governors Edwin Morgan of New York and Richard Yates of Illinois sent personal agents. The governors who met at Cleveland sent messages to Lincoln, assuring him of their support in suppressing the Rebellion.³

When Lincoln received the governors at the White House on 7 May 1861, the governors renewed their pledge of men and resources, provided Lincoln would follow a “determined and energetic” policy.⁴ Although the tone of the Cleveland Conference was not colored by the radicalism which found its spokesmen at the Altoona Conference, the precedent of expressing the sentiments of state executives through governors’ conferences had been established.

The Altoona Conference had its beginning in June 1862, when Secretary Seward arrived in New York with a plan for soliciting the support of the governors in an effort to raise badly needed troops. After McClellan’s severe losses in the Peninsula, President Lincoln had begun to think that enlistments would have to be increased by at least 150,000 and that such a call would be most effective if backed by a petition from the governors requesting the action. Lincoln sent Seward to New York with the draft of a document for the governors’ request, and the draft of the President’s reply.⁵ In meetings with New York’s Governor Edwin Morgan and Thurlow Weed, Seward presented his plan. Andrew Curtin, recuperating from an illness in New York, was urged by Thomas Scott (Assistant Secretary of War, Pennsylvania Railroad vice-president, and friend of Curtin) to meet with Seward, Weed, and Morgan on 30 June 1862. At this meeting Seward suggested that he was going to try to persuade the mayors of northern

³ Nevins, loc. cit.; Hesseltine, 162-164.
cities to confer and speak in favor of an enlistment drive, whereupon Curtin suggested that a conference of Northern governors, rather than mayors, would carry more weight. Seward asked Curtin to put the suggestion in writing, which Seward telegraphed to Lincoln.\(^6\) Owing to the immediate need for troops, there was no time for a conference of governors to solicit their support of Lincoln's petition. However, Governors Morgan and Curtin agreed to telegraph all the state executives for their consent to the petition. Seventeen governors agreed to the idea, and on 1 July, Lincoln published the petition, calling for 300,000 three-year volunteers.\(^7\) Only Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts suspected a trick designed to disarm the radical Republicans and refused to sign the memorial. In a note to Francis P. Blair, Andrew explained that he did not want his name to appear on a "... document dictated from Washington but apparently emanating from the governors..."\(^8\)

As the summer passed, the Union forces continued to lose ground. McClellan failed to reinforce Pope's army, which was defeated by Lee, Jackson, and Longstreet at Manassas late in August. The Union sorely needed troops; morale was low; and the Confederates threatened to take Washington, cut into Maryland, and finally move into Pennsylvania.\(^9\) By September 1862, Republican radicals were becoming more vociferous in their criticism of Lincoln. In addition to criticizing McClellan, the radicals were pressing the President for a proclamation emancipating the slaves. During the first week of September, five New England governors — John A. Andrew of Massachusetts, W. A. Buckingham of Connecticut, Israel Washburn of Maine, William

\(^6\) Hesseltine and Wolf, loc. cit.; A. K. McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1905), I, 539. At this point, one wonders whether Curtin was not playing unwittingly into the hands of Lincoln and Seward. W. B. Hesseltine and H. Wolf have deprived Curtin of some of the credit given him in historical interpretations by implying that the apparent intention of Seward to call a conference of mayors was a preconceived scheme to get Curtin to take the initiative in calling a conference of governors. The authors further suggest that Seward intentionally started rumors about a conference of mayors to stir the governors into action.


\(^8\) Pearson, II, 35. The account given by Hesseltine and Wolf, loc. cit., indicates that Andrew was persuaded to sign the petition on 2 July, and that his assent was backdated to 28 June to give the document the necessary unanimity. Leonard Ray, in "The Loyal War Governors' Conference at Altoona, Pennsylvania," *Past and Present* (Sept. 1962), 17, supports the latter story. In a letter written by Curtin to McClure in 1892, Curtin says Andrew later agreed to sign the petition. McClure, *Abraham Lincoln and Men of War Times*, 270.

\(^9\) Ray, 19.
Sprague of Rhode Island, and Nathaniel Berry of New Hampshire—met with three members of the New York National War Committee at Providence, Rhode Island. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Lincoln's Cabinet and his generals. The delegates met with Lincoln on 10 September and demanded the removal of Secretary Seward and General McClellan. Denied their requests, the governors nursed their grievances until the Altoona Conference gave them a second opportunity to try to impose their views.¹⁰

Andrew Curtin sensed the radical pressure and remembered the New York meeting with Seward, at which the possibility of a conference of governors had been discussed. Knowing that a moderate statement from the governors would strengthen Lincoln's hand in the face of radical criticism, Curtin directed his attention to one of the chief centers of radicalism, John A. Andrew. On 6 September, Curtin telegraphed Andrew, saying: "In the present emergency would it not be well if the Loyal governors would meet at some point in the border states to take measures for a more active support of the government?"¹¹ Andrew answered that he would be willing to attend such a conference, but the invitation which went out on 14 September was issued by moderates: Curtin, David Tod of Ohio, and F. H. Pierpont of West Virginia.¹²

Between the 14 September calling and the 24 September meeting of the Altoona Conference, the situation of the Union changed considerably. At Antietam, McClellan had won a narrow victory over Lee. McClellan's victory was incomplete, however, for the General failed to pursue Lee in retreat and instead let him withdraw unimpeded. Radical criticism of McClellan reached a peak, but Lincoln remained firm in his determination to retain McClellan. The second attraction of the Altoona Conference, at least for the radical governors, was the prospect of making a pronouncement on the issue of emancipation. On this issue, Lincoln took the initiative by bringing out his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on 22 September 1862, two days before Altoona. Lincoln, who had had the document prepared for two months, was apparently waiting for a decisive Northern victory before pronouncing

¹⁰ Ibid., 22; Hesseltine and Wolf, loc. cit.
¹² The New York Herald, 25 Sept. 1862, 1, reprinted the invitation: "We invite a meeting of the Governors of the loyal States, to be held at Altoona, Pennsylvania, on the 24th. Please reply to Governor Curtin."
any emancipation measure. The victory of the Union forces at Antietam, although by no means decisive, may have given Lincoln the opportunity for which he had waited. In any case, the President sensed radical pressure for emancipation, and he decided to eliminate one of the chief grievances of the radical governors before they could demand a more drastic emancipation measure.\textsuperscript{13} The Proclamation was less than the radicals wanted, but it was enough to remove one of their major complaints before the Altoona Conference had even begun.\textsuperscript{14} As William B. Hesseltine has said, "The astute Lincoln had cut the ground from under the radicals, and . . . they knew it." \textsuperscript{15}

Although no minutes of the Altoona meetings were kept, and no newsmen were in attendance at the actual sessions, the 25 September issue of the \textit{New York Herald} carried reports of the activities of the governors. From these reports it is possible to develop a fairly complete account of the conference proceedings.\textsuperscript{16}

The Altoona Conference was attended by thirteen Northern governors and the representatives of three others. Of those invited, only Governor Edwin Morgan of New York declined, for reasons which have not been definitely established. Curtin was disappointed by Morgan's refusal to come to Altoona, and wrote to the New York governor a letter, in which he said:

\begin{quote}
I understand the meeting of loyal Governors to be called for the purpose of considering which measures would be proper to strengthen the Government of the United States in the present critical posture of affairs.

It is to be regretted that your avocations [?] will prevent your attendance.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

By morning, 24 September, most of the governors had arrived in

\textsuperscript{13} Hesseltine, 247-248; C. Sandburg, \textit{Abraham Lincoln, the War Years} (New York, 1939), I, 585.

\textsuperscript{14} Pearson, II, 51; T. H. Williams, \textit{Lincoln and the Radicals} (Madison, 1941), 182; Hesseltine, 256-257.

\textsuperscript{15} Hesseltine, 257.

\textsuperscript{16} Ray, 30; Williams, 185. Arriving at Altoona with the War Governors was a correspondent from James Gordon Bennett's \textit{New York Herald}, keen competitor of Horace Greeley's \textit{New York Tribune}. Convinced that the Altoona meeting was inspired and dominated by the radicals, the \textit{Herald} reporter demonstrates an obvious bias, but since he is believed to have been the only correspondent at Altoona, his reports are invaluable in studying the activity of the governors.

\textsuperscript{17} Andrew G. Curtin, Harrisburg, 23 Sept. 1862, letter to Edwin Morgan. Photostatic reproduction held by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Original in mss Division, New York State Library. Leonard Ray writes that Morgan declined, saying he did not believe in the propriety of the meeting and that New York had already contributed more troops than any other state. Ray, 23. McClure, in \textit{Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania}, I, 539, says Morgan's reasons were never publicized.
Altoona. After breakfast at the Logan House, Altoona’s finest hotel, the governors were taken by railroad on a sightseeing tour of the Alleghenies and returned to the Logan House for lunch.

The business session, begun at one o’clock that afternoon, was closed to outsiders, but the Herald correspondent apparently obtained enough second-hand information to make the case that McClellan’s removal was the major topic under discussion. McClellan’s critics — John Andrew of Massachusetts, William Sprague of Rhode Island, Richard Yates of Illinois, and Samuel Kirkwood of Iowa — entered into a debate with moderates Augustus Bradford, Governor of Maryland and Chairman of the Conference, David Tod of Ohio, and Andrew Curtin of Pennsylvania. According to the Herald “... the debate revealed the fact that the ‘infernals’ are playing a deep game — nothing less than their revolutionary schemes of superseding the President, and making Frémont the ‘great man.’” The morning after the Herald published its account of the Washington interview, Governor Andrew visited Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, who wrote of the interview in his diary:

Gov. Andrew came to breakfast. Laughed — vexed too — at Report in Herald of proceeding of Governors at Altoona, which he ascribed to the exclusion of reporters.

Although the reporter probably exaggerated the radical sentiment, it is certain that a difference of opinion about McClellan did exist. Curtin defended the General, incorrectly saying that McClellan was responsible for stopping the rebels at Antietam with a smaller force than the enemy, without benefit of reinforcements. The Herald reported that Governor Bradford believed McClellan to be the best general in the country, and that even if there were a “blemish” in McClellan’s character, this was not the time to demand his removal.

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18 Thomas Scott, who had been present when Seward and Curtin met in New York, probably suggested Altoona as a meeting place. The governors could not meet in Harrisburg because General Lee’s forces were threatening to invade the capital. Had the governors met at Bedford Springs, they would still have had to travel to Altoona to make train connections. Altoona, the site of the main repair shops and general superintendent’s office of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad, made possible direct railroad transportation to the conference. S. R. Kamm, *The Civil War Career of Thomas A. Scott* (Philadelphia, 1940), 145-146.


21 *Ibid*. Due to Curtin’s objections, William A. Croffut of the *New York Tribune* was not permitted to witness the conference. Sandburg, III, 425.
In naming John Andrew, a radical, and Andrew Curtin, a moderate, to write the governors' Address to the President, the moderates were able to inject a moderate tone into the document that its author, the radical John Andrew, would be obliged to defend. How they managed to keep the McClellan question out of the Address is a matter of speculation, for the only written record of the conference is the Address which came out of the closed sessions.

On the emancipation question, the radicals again clashed with the moderate element. Curtin's foreknowledge of Lincoln's intention to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation indicates that the purpose of the Altoona Conference as far as Curtin was concerned was to sustain the President in his policy, and not, as has been suggested, to force Lincoln to issue unwillingly a statement on emancipation. In a letter to Alexander McClure in 1892, Curtin recalls that in a meeting with Lincoln and Andrew, the governors obtained the President's approval before calling the Altoona Conference:

In that interview he did not attempt to conceal the fact that we were upon the eve of an Emancipation policy, and he had from us the assurance that the Altoona Conference would cordially endorse such a policy. 22

The proclamation on which John Andrew and the radicals had counted proved to be weaker than they had expected. It followed from the radicals' strong anti-slavery attitude that once emancipation was ordered, they would enlist the liberated Negroes in the Union Army. 23 But the September Proclamation was only a warning declaring that "... slaves in States or parts of States whose people were still in rebellion, January 1, 1863, against the federal government should be free." 24 The Proclamation did not free any slaves, nor did it furnish Negro replacements for the radicals' white constituents. 25 Nevertheless, the fact that Lincoln had taken a step toward emancipation removed some of the force of the radical demands. As Weeden has written, the Proclamation

... took away one of the chief causes of immediate agitation ... the political and practical effect of the conference was weakened and scattered by the actual issue of the Proclamation of Emancipation ... 26

23 J. F. Rhodes, History of the United States (New York, 1910), IV, 166.
24 Ibid., 212.
25 Hesseltine and Wolf, 201.
During the evening session of the conference, Andrew presented the preamble and resolutions of the Address, which were debated until one-thirty the next morning. The Address was accepted as modified, and the governors adjourned with the decision to go to Washington to present their Address to Lincoln on 26 September.²⁷

When Curtin and the governors met with Lincoln, the Chief Executive was in full control,²⁸ despite the addition of a few radical governors who had not been present in Altoona. The Address, which was read by Governor Andrew, pledged the governors' loyalty to Lincoln by requesting that Lincoln call for a reserve force of 100,000 new troops and by endorsing the Emancipation Proclamation.²⁹ The Address contained no mention of General McClellan. After listening courteously to the Address, Lincoln thanked the governors and prepared to leave. But the radicals would not readily yield on the McClellan issue. Governor Kirkwood raised the question but was quickly subdued by Lincoln:

If I believed our cause would be benefited by removing General McClellan tomorrow, I would remove him tomorrow. I do not believe so today, but if the time shall come when I shall so believe, I will remove him promptly, and not till then.³⁰

With this, the interview was ended.

New York editorial reaction split into the expected camps. In a front page comment on the Altoona Address, the New York Tribune called the document an "Unqualified Indorsement" (sic) of the Emancipation Proclamation, and in an editorial called it "... the most conclusive answer to the venomous slander flung at the Governors by the Rebel-sympathizing press of the North."³¹ The Tribune's rival, the more moderate New York Herald, was still suspicious of the Address:

Although the document is considerably modified and milder than when first presented by Governor Andrew, it still has a strong tincture of "infernalism" .... With all its radical features in regard to slavery the radicals were not satisfied with it, and are bitter, sour, and morose to-day.³²

Opinions as to the importance of the Altoona Conference cover a

²⁸ Hesseltine and Wolf, 204; Randall, II, 231-232: "... the President was entirely confident of his ability to command the situation and even to use it for his own purpose."
³⁰ Hesseltine, 260; Williams, 185, writes that Lincoln ushered the governors out without giving them a chance to voice their complaints.
³² The New York Herald, 26 Sept. 1862, 1.
wide range. Perhaps the most exaggerated statement of the importance of the conference is that of John Russell Young of the *Philadelphia Press*. In a chapter written for William H. Egle's biography of Curtin, Young writes that the "... conference, next to the Proclamation of Emancipation [was] the most decisive civil event of the War." 33 William Babcock Weeden, author of *War Government, Federal and State*, shares Young's view, but notes that "... nevertheless, it was a dangerous undertaking in the development of state government within the obligations of the Union ... The movement was constantly denounced by the opposition ..." 34 It is natural to expect that Curtin's close friend, Alexander McClure, would regard the conference as an event of great significance. According to McClure, the conference "... was, in fact, the turning point of the war ..." 35 McClure relates a conversation with Alexander Stephens, in which the Vice-President of the defeated Confederacy is reported to have considered Curtin's Altoona Conference as the "... most destructive blow to the South." According to McClure, Stephens felt that without the conference the North would have been demoralized by the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Union Army could have been defeated. 36

Less sweeping in their evaluations of the Altoona Conference are S. K. Stevens and Tarring S. Davis. To Stevens, the executive director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission:

The best evidence indicates that it was conceived by Curtin for the honest purpose of strengthening the President and securing some greater unity ... and that it achieved a worthwhile purpose in its deliberateness and the declaration of support for Lincoln. 37

The view of Tarring Davis, author of a history of Blair County, that the conference "... served more as a moral force than anything else" 38 is put forth in Leonard Ray's recent study of the meeting:

At any rate, the confrontation of governors at Altoona had a worthwhile result which undoubtedly lasted a considerable time: the psychological influence of unanimity, arduously achieved, on the participants themselves. Their lengthy talk in the Logan House produced only relative and very qualified agreement. But the discipline of concensus was as crucial to our democracy during the Civil War as it is today. 39

34 Weeden, 228.
39 Ray, 43.
Conflicting with the opinion of John Russell Young is that of historian Allan Nevins. Nevins does not question the motives of Governor Curtin, but he recognizes the danger of the radical influence and the resulting charges made by the anti-Republican press:

One result of the proclamation was to turn a potentially harmful convention of Northern governors... into an innocuous farce.... It inevitably aroused some pernicious newspaper speculation that it was hostile to Lincoln, that it aimed at the overthrow of McClellan, that it was a maneuver of Andrew and Curtin to get themselves re-elected, and so on.... Misrepresentation of the conference nevertheless persisted, and it had better never been held.40

Carl Sandburg, one of the most outstanding of Lincoln's biographers, also recognized the risky political implications of the Altoona Conference. According to Sandburg, the governors' backing of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation as a result of the Altoona Conference enabled the Democrats to raise the issue that the War was no longer for the Union but against slavery.41

Perhaps the best indication of the value of the Altoona Conference is that it served the intended purpose of those who called it. Seen in this way, the conference was an instrument in the hands of the moderates in mobilizing support for the administration. Although no one has decisively proven that Lincoln and Seward really engineered the conference of governors and that Curtin was just their puppet in proposing it, the result of the conference was favorable to the administration. By including Andrew in their planning, the moderates were able to involve the radicals in an incident which was turned to Lincoln's advantage. The radicals' chief grievances were voiced, but their effectiveness was weakened by Lincoln's control during the White House interview and by the fact that their signatures appeared on the Address which sustained administration policy. Once the President had the governors' assurance of support, he was in a position to call for more troops, as well as to execute his Emancipation Proclamation.42

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Andrew G. Curtin's influence on the success of the Lincoln administration was not limited to his position of leadership among the war governors. In the face of rising Democratic strength and

40 Nevins, War Becomes Revolution, 239-240.
41 Sandburg, I, 585.
42 Hesseltine and Wolf, 204: "[The Address]... was a valuable document for Lincoln, and he used it to force the hands of the state executives." Randall, II, 232, has observed that "The public statements that issued from the White House were favorable to the President; it was in that sense that the Altoona incident took its place in history."
criticism of the Lincoln administration's conduct of the War, the role of Curtin and his political associates was vital in sustaining the Lincoln policies during national as well as state elections. Lincoln, in return, took a keen interest in Pennsylvania elections. The President's interest is understandable in the light of the early October election dates, which enabled a prediction of voting trends in November, and the strength of Pennsylvania's position as a supplier of men and materials.

The election of 1861, although not a major election, was important in that it introduced two problems which were to become increasingly troublesome as the War continued. The first, and perhaps most vital, problem was the indication of rising dissatisfaction with the conduct of the War, coupled with a decline in enthusiasm as the Union sustained military losses. The second issue was that of the disenfranchised soldiers in the field. Although the efforts of Curtin and Lincoln to use the soldiers to their advantage were in some measure successful, these efforts aroused considerable ill feeling in the state. The defeat of the Union forces at Bull Run in July had ended hopes for an early termination of the War. This change in attitude combined with General McClellan's reluctance to initiate an advance into Confederate territory and served to dampen the original enthusiasm expressed in the North after the fall of Fort Sumter.

The Pennsylvania election of 1861 was one of local character; county offices and seats in the state legislature were the only contests. The People's Party, not yet known by the name "Republican," had reasonable assurance of holding control of the state senate, as only one-third of that body were to be elected, and from 1860 the Republicans held control of the other two-thirds. In the lower house, all one hundred of whose members were to be elected in October, the Republicans had to maneuver for the control needed to enact Governor Curtin's program for the support of the Union cause.

Alexander McClure, still acting as chairman of the People's Party in Pennsylvania, hoped to bring about a combination of the People's Party with the War Democrats to defeat the Democratic candidates in the lower house. As there were no state officers to be elected, there was no necessity for state conventions and hence no party platforms.

43 *Infra*, 37.
Andrew Curtin hoped to aid the Republican cause by enfranchising the Pennsylvania soldiers. In an October proclamation, Curtin ordered that polls be opened in the camps of the Pennsylvania regiments in accordance with a legislative act of 1839. Thus began the issue of fraudulent campaign and election tactics which was to concern the Curtin administration for the duration of the War. Dissatisfaction with the conduct of the election among the troops led to agitation against the Act of 1839. The Act was declared unconstitutional in a Supreme Court decision of March 1862.\textsuperscript{46} Even the \textit{New York Tribune}, a pro-Curtin newspaper, expressed doubts as to the wisdom of enfranchising the troops:

> Politicians are so numerous around the camps that it may be necessary for the public interest to countermand the order . . . .\textsuperscript{47}

The \textit{Tribune} had already reported electioneering among Pennsylvania troops on the Potomac and predicted that the presence of politicians might adversely affect troop morale.\textsuperscript{48}

Although the election of 1861 resulted in a Republican victory,\textsuperscript{49} the contest indicated that the People's Party in Pennsylvania could not rely on its own strength without the founding of a "Union" party movement. In arousing sentiment against the enfranchisement of troops\textsuperscript{50} which resulted in their disenfranchisement in 1862, Curtin may have sown the seeds of Democratic victory in 1862.

In the state and national elections of 1862, the trend away from the Republican Party towards the Democracy became more pronounced. Not only did Curtin's party face Democratic opposition; the radical, as well as the ultra-conservative, Republicans attacked the Lincoln administration's war measures, which were defended by Curtin's party in Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{51} Dissatisfaction with the Lincoln administration stemmed chiefly from three causes: military setbacks in the summer of 1862, the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation,\textsuperscript{52} and conscription. The voters, still discouraged by military defeats on the Peninsula and McClellan's failure to pursue an active policy, and alarmed by Stuart's raid into Pennsylvania five days before the elec-

\textsuperscript{46} Davis, 210.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}, 3 Oct. 1861, 4.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, 10 Oct. 1861, 5; Davis, 207.
\textsuperscript{50} Davis, 210. Many camp elections were fraudulent, especially in the Philadelphia area, from which one entire set of ballots (the Schimpfilier returns) were sent in, bearing names of non-existent regiment and colonel.
\textsuperscript{51} Nevins, II, 307.
\textsuperscript{52} See the role of the Altoona Conference, \textit{supra}, 28-29.
tion,53 wanted the administration to take a more vigorous course in the War. Criticism of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was no less pronounced; radical Republicans wanted immediate emancipation and enlistment of Negroes in the Union Army and ultra-conservative Pennsylvania Republicans feared intrusion of a large number of liberated Negroes into their state.54

Although it was recognized that a draft would have to be put into effect if the Union were to have sufficient troop strength, it was also expected that a conscription order would hurt the Republican cause, both by the unpopular feature of involuntary service and by taking People’s Party support into the field and thus dis-enfranchising them.55 Alexander McClure, who was both People’s Party chairman and in charge of the draft in Pennsylvania, realized the unpopularity of the forced enlistments, and in some doubtful districts juggled draft statistics so as to make the issue less objectionable.56 McClure then shrewdly postponed further draft calls until after the election.57

In an effort to counteract the increase in Democratic strength, Governor Curtin, Alexander McClure, and John Forney (Republican owner of the Philadelphia Press) sought to revive the Union Party. Stanton Davis, who has written a careful study of Pennsylvania politics from 1861 to 1863, characterizes this Union Party:

This queer Peoples-Republican-Know-Nothing-Abolition-renegade Democratic combination christened itself the “National Union” party.58

The effort to revive the strength of the Union Party was in vain, however, for it was running against a far more efficient Democratic party organization.59

53 The New York Tribune, a Republican newspaper, accused the Breckinridge Democrats of inviting the Rebels under Stuart to invade Pennsylvania for supplies and to divert People’s Union soldiers into the fields and thus disenfranchise them. The Tribune praised Curtin for seeing through the plot: “In all this campaign, the master hand of Gov. Curtin has been plainly visible. Stuart’s raid into Chambersburg was seen, from the first, to be a thieving expedition and an election trick combined.” The New York Tribune, 20 Oct. 1862, 3.
54 Heseltine, 271; Nevins, loc. cit.
55 The New York Tribune reported that foreigners had not naturalized for fear of the draft, but at the last minute had taken out naturalization papers in order to vote for “Copperheads.” The Tribune praised Curtin’s wisdom in making certain that the “last minute citizens” were registered at the polls so that they would be subject to the draft. loc. cit.
56 S. Davis, 256.
57 Russell, 270.
58 S. Davis, 242.
59 Nevins, II, 319; The New York Tribune stated that the Pennsylvania People’s Union Party was “... broken and crippled by feuds and factions ... utterly without organization ...” The New York Tribune, 10 Oct. 1862.
The moderate Democratic victory in the state legislature in 1862 gave them a majority of one, by which the Democrats were able to elect one of their party to the U.S. Senate. Thus, the Pennsylvania congressional delegation had a slight Democratic majority. In the opinions of two authorities on the Civil War, William B. Hesseltine and Stanton Davis, the results of the election of 1862 in a number of Northern states indicated the weakening of Republican strength.

As Hesseltine has stated:

The people... had repudiated the Emancipation Proclamation and the Altoona Address, and had rebuked the Administration for its nationalizing tendencies — but the border-state policy had saved their party’s control of the government.

Curtin, as a moderate border state governor, had modified the impact of radical Republican demands for abolition. For, although the moderate governors at the Altoona Conference were placed in the position of having to endorse the Emancipation Proclamation, Curtin and the moderates had given Lincoln the upper hand by tempering the demands of the radicals.

The advent of the gubernatorial election in 1863 found Andrew Curtin in broken physical condition. He had undergone surgery during his first term, and may have been anxious to retire from office in 1863. Curtin had agreed to withdraw his name from the contest, but he again attempted to revive the Union Party in support of the administration. The Governor contacted the leading War Democrats in an effort to form a non-partisan movement to nominate Democrat William B. Franklin. The movement collapsed, however, when the

61 Nevins, loc. cit.; Hesseltine, 265, 271; Randall, II, 233.
62 Hesseltine, 265, 271-272; Davis, 265.
63 Hesseltine, loc. cit. Allan Nevins does not believe the Republican losses were as great as they appeared to be: “Considering the unfavorable circumstances, the Administration did fairly well in the North.” Nevins points out that a difference of but 2000 votes would have changed the outcome of the Pennsylvania election, but that, nevertheless, the election was a serious administration reverse. The Emancipation Proclamation lost votes in many areas, but Nevins believes the failure of the government to end the War was the most important issue. Nevins, II, 321-322.
64 Stanton Davis sees no reason for believing that Curtin had definitely abandoned the idea of a second term, in the light of a June goodwill tour of northeastern Pennsylvania made by the Governor and Mrs. Curtin. Davis, 291.
65 Hesseltine notes that while Curtin was moving closer to the Lincoln administration, Cameron was moving into the radical camp. Hesseltine, 327.
66 In a letter from Alexander McClure to Eli Slifer, McClure writes, “I fear Curtin is assenting involuntarily to the use of his name for re-nomination. If Franklin is nominated on the 17th every consideration of prudence will dictate his peremptory withdrawal; and under any circumstances it is of much more than doubtful wisdom.” Alexander K. McClure, 9 June 1863,
Democrats met in June and named Judge George W. Woodward to run on the Democratic ticket.67

The Governor's wife, Kate Curtin, pleaded with Alexander McClure to persuade Curtin to decline the nomination for a second term. McClure discussed the matter with Curtin, who agreed to accept a first-class foreign mission if McClure could arrange to get one from Lincoln. McClure conferred with John Forney and Curtin's arch-foe Simon Cameron in Washington.68 McClure, whose interest was not only in the success of his party but also in the health of his friend, secured Cameron's agreement to the idea of a mission for Curtin. Cameron was no doubt anxious to have Curtin out of his way in Pennsylvania politics and to put his political ally, John Covode, in the governor's office. McClure, Forney and Cameron met with Lincoln, who agreed to offer a first-class mission to Curtin. On receipt of Lincoln's offer, Governor Curtin announced to the press that he would not be a candidate for renomination.69 Lincoln's decision to offer the mission to Curtin may have been based on his knowledge of the lack of party unity which would threaten Curtin's success in October.

By the time Pennsylvania Republicans convened at Pittsburgh in August, Curtin's supporters had demanded his renomination, while the Cameron forces were earnestly working for the nomination of John Covode.70 Curtin, supposedly accepting the idea of a second term

67 Hesseltine, loc. cit., Russell, 287; Davis, 286; McClure, Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania, II, 43-44.
68 McClure was probably referring to this conference in the following part of a letter to Slifer: "If Curtin's special friends go to Washington first, I fear the result: they have been so plied with falsehoods there, that they have no hope of Penna; and it is of first importance that some others than Curtin's immediate friends should confer with them first. This was arranged to be done as a preparatory movement and we fixed the earliest [illegible] we could follow it." Alexander K. McClure, 24 Aug. 1863, to Eli Slifer. Slifer-Dill Papers.
69 Harrisburg Telegraph, 15 Apr. 1863, 2; Ibid., 8 June 1863, 2. William M. Meredith, Curtin's attorney general, wrote to Eli Slifer: "You saw no doubt the editorial in to-day's paper ... these two papers render it reasonably clear that the Adm. at Washington means to hold the Governor to his pledge, and will defeat him if he runs — when I call it a 'pledge,' I refer to what you told me the other day, of which I had not before been aware. — It seems to me that the Governor ought to make up his mind definitely, and if he decides not to be a Candidate, should announce the fact at the earliest moment." William Morris Meredith, 31 July 1863, letter, to Eli Slifer. Slifer-Dill Papers. Meredith's speculation was disproved, however, for Curtin was not held to his "pledge" and received considerable support from the administration. McClure, II, 45-49; Davis, 285; Hesseltine, loc. cit.
70 One particularly vehement backer of Covode was William Painter of West Chester. Painter wrote to Covode from West Chester, 18 Aug. 1863, that
as his patriotic duty, agreed to have his name put before the convention, where he drew both applause and hissing. Pittsburgh, a stronghold of the Cameron-Covode faction, was the center of opposition to Curtin. In addition, the Governor's approval of the repeal of the railroad tonnage tax was harshly criticized in Pittsburgh. Nevertheless, Covode, perhaps seeing Curtin's strength in other parts of the state, withdrew his name from the ballot, and Curtin was nominated on the first ballot.\textsuperscript{71}

The Democratic nominee for governor, George Woodward, was a State Supreme Court justice and a neighbor of Curtin in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Woodward, who was an old political enemy of Cameron,\textsuperscript{72} was perhaps the best choice the Democrats could have made. As Stanton Davis has suggested:

Woodward was probably the ablest representative of his party in the state, and it was confidently expected that he would be elected with a good majority. His nomination was largely dictated by the belief that after the war had ended he would be better equipped than anyone else to handle the important constitutional and legal questions which would inevitably arise.\textsuperscript{73}

The outcome of the election of 1863 in Pennsylvania was not at all certain, and the campaign was bitterly waged throughout the state.\textsuperscript{74} The issues focused on the Lincoln administration's suspension of \textit{habeas corpus} and the suppression of freedoms of speech and press. In addition to criticizing these acts of Lincoln's administration, the Democrats did not want the termination of the War to be conditional on abolition.\textsuperscript{75} Curtin ran on his record as the "Soldiers' Friend." Republican newspapers carried editorials praising the Governor's success in providing for the soldiers, while the Democratic press criticized his failure to do so.\textsuperscript{76}

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Curtin was making his calculations for the Presidency, and that if Chase and Stanton would give their backing the \textit{Inquirer} (\textit{Philadelphia Inquirer}) would crush Curtin. Ed. note: See facsimile of letter on pages 39-42. Original in archives of Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.


\textsuperscript{72} Hugh Manchester, Bellefonte historian, has written in a feature article for the \textit{Centre Democrat} that Cameron had defeated Woodward in a U.S. Senate election in 1845 and then used his influence to prevent Woodward's election to the U.S. Supreme Court.

\textsuperscript{73} Davis, 278.

\textsuperscript{74} In a letter written to New York Governor Edwin Morgan, 1 Oct. 1863, Curtin writes: "... I am having a hotly-contested canvass . . ."

\textsuperscript{75} Davis, v, 306.

\textsuperscript{76} The \textit{Pittsburgh Post}, decidedly anti-Curtin, printed the following editorial evaluation of Curtin's claim to be the "Soldiers' Friend": "What has he done? He has sent our brave volunteers into the field, victims of fraud . . . twice he has allowed the State to be invaded . . . always he has
The *Pittsburgh Post*, the organ of Democrat James Barr, followed the election from the months preceding the conventions through the final tabulation of results. The *Post*, like other Democratic papers, was in a position to make political capital of the ill-concealed split between the Cameron and Curtin wings of the Republican party and waged an editorial battle with the Cameron-oriented *Pittsburgh Gazette* over Curtin's nomination.77

Because Curtin's health was poor, his speechmaking was limited to a few major engagements in doubtful districts.78 On such occasions, Curtin's campaign oratory carried little content and much emotion:

...I flatter myself that I have at least one virtue. I am for my country and my Government... The rich, free blood of Pennsylvania has been poured forth upon the soil of every state in rebellion. The bones of our people lie whitening on Southern fields, and let us swear by that bloody covenant that we will stand by our Government, and that our people shall not die unhonored upon a foreign soil.79

In a letter written to Secretary of the Commonwealth Eli Slifer, probably dating from the 1863 campaign, Curtin refers to the hostile attitude he had encountered in the Covode-Cameron districts surrounding Pittsburgh:

I think personal and political aspirations were much softened by my visit to Pittsburg... I have not [met] such a reception in all respects since I have been in office, and have not made as good a speech.80

The *Pittsburgh Post* turned Curtin's limited speaking engagements

been the servant of the War Department..." *Pittsburgh Post*, 4 Sept. 1863, 2. The *Post* presented further evidence that Curtin was not the "Soldiers' Friend" he claimed to be when it carried a letter by an unnamed soldier of 15 Sept. 1863, on the front page: "All our boys would vote for Woodward if they could get a chance. They do hate Andy Curtin with all their might." On the other side of the political fence, the Republican *Harrisburg Telegraph* printed a letter from a soldier in a Harrisburg hospital: "We all love Andy Curtin. We all want to vote for him if the Copperheads will grant us the glorious privilege." *Harrisburg Telegraph*, 26 Aug. 1863, 2.

77 In reply to the about-face of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* which had favored Covode against Curtin before the nominating convention *The Post* wrote: "It was a question between a set of the most corrupt political rascals the country ever witnessed — one set led by Cameron and the other led by Curtin, whom *The Gazette* proved over and over again to be a rogue." *The Pittsburgh Post*, 26 Aug. 1863, 2.

78 Announcements of Curtin's speaking engagements indicate that in September and October, he was to appear in Erie, Meadville, Pittsburgh, Norristown, West Chester, Beaver, Washington, Wilkes Barre, Scranton, Greensburg, Altoona, Catasaqua, and Easton. *Harrisburg Telegraph*, 5 Sept. 1863, 2; 12 Sept. 1863, 1; 17 Sept. 1863, 1; 2 Oct. 1863, 1.

79 *Harrisburg Telegraph*, 19 Sept. 1863, 2, carried excerpts from Curtin's speech in Pittsburgh.

80 Andrew Curtin, no date, letter to Eli Slifer. Slifer-Dill Papers.
into a campaign issue, reminding its readers that although Curtin had
deprecated the nomination because of ill health, he was now

... on the stump, haranguing the people, begging them to continue in office

... Forney ... now on the stump, travelling with him, performing every act

of political profligacy ... 81

In addition to John Forney, a number of other prominent political
figures spoke for Curtin in Pennsylvania, including Edgar Cowan, W. H. Armstrong, Thaddeus Stevens, A. K. McClure, and William D. Kelley. Kelley was scheduled to make at least twelve speeches for Curtin in the last month of the campaign.82

New York's Governor Morgan contributed to the Curtin cam-
paign, but the nature of his contribution has not been ascertained.83

Even Simon Cameron, Curtin's arch-rival, spoke during the campaign, although Cameron could not bring himself to praising the War Governor:

... as all of you know, I come not here to advocate the election of Andrew G. Curtin as Andrew G. Curtin: but I come here to aid in the election of the repre-
sentative of the loyalty of Pennsylvania. This is no time for personal feelings, and I have none.84

Lincoln, whose policies were under fire in Pennsylvania, was
noticeably concerned over the election. In a 13 October 1863 entry in
his diary, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles wrote: "The elections
in Pennsylvania and Ohio absorb attention. The President says he
feels nervous." 85

When Lincoln inquired by telegraph as to the standing of the
Pennsylvania elections,86 he was cheered by the results. Gideon
Welles wrote:

I stopped in to see and congratulate the President, who is in good spirits and
greatly relieved from the depression of yesterday. He told me he had more anxiety in regard to the election results of yesterday than he had in 1860 when
he was chosen.87

81 The Pittsburgh Post, 11 Sept. 1863, 2. Andrew Gregg, a relative of Governor Curtin, wrote to Eli Slifer about Forney's campaign activity: "... Col. Forney was pressing his claims — I think his claim on the Gov. very slender. I dont [sic] know what his course was after the nomination but before he was a most bitter enemy of Curtin — you are aware of that." Andrew Gregg, 26 Nov. 1861, letter to Eli Slifer. Slifer-Dill Papers.
82 Harrisburg Telegraph, 17 Sept. 1863, 1; Pittsburgh Post, 7 Sept. 1863, 2.
83 In a letter to Governor Morgan, Curtin wrote: "I do not know that anything more can now be done, save in the way I have asked." Andrew Curtin, letter to Governor Edwin Morgan, 1 Oct. 1863. Morgan, mss, New York State Library.
84 Harrisburg Telegraph, 13 Oct. 1863, 1.
87 Beale, loc. cit.
Lincoln had reason to rejoice in the election results. Curtin had polled a majority of 15,000 votes, about half the majority he had in 1860, largely through the efforts of Lincoln to furlough soldiers home to vote.\(^\text{88}\) Curtin’s attorney general, William Meredith, had appealed to Secretary of War Stanton to have the soldiers furloughed, and, much as Stanton disliked Curtin, he obliged. Curtin later made a trip to Washington to thank Lincoln and Stanton, but was rebuffed by the latter and never made any effort to thank him.\(^\text{89}\)

Two other factors contributed to Curtin’s success in 1863: the emergence of Union Leagues in Pennsylvania, and the Union victory in the Battle of Gettysburg. The Union Leagues were founded during the early years of the Civil War as Republican propaganda organs. The societies were mostly semi-secret, but their activities, particularly in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, contributed greatly to the Republican strength in Pennsylvania.\(^\text{90}\)

The Battle of Gettysburg was a major, if not the most important, factor in the 1863 Pennsylvania election. The Union victory at Gettysburg gave renewed hope that the War might soon be terminated, and took strength from the radical Republican criticism of Lincoln’s administration of the War.\(^\text{91}\)

The Presidential election of 1864 gave Curtin the opportunity to repay Lincoln’s interest in the 1863 contest. Lincoln’s chances in Pennsylvania were uncertain, as his opponent, General George B. McClellan, was a Pennsylvanian and commanded a measure of popularity.\(^\text{92}\)

The results of the October elections in Pennsylvania indicated a dissatisfaction with Lincoln’s policies, which would have defeated Lincoln had not counter-measures been taken. Simon Cameron, Chair-
man of the State Republican Committee, saw the signs of discontent in the October results, and between October and November achieved some success in uniting the state electorate behind Lincoln.93

Realizing the uncertainty of the Pennsylvania elections, and knowing of Curtin’s reputation as the “Soldiers’ Friend,” Lincoln arranged to have 10,000 soldiers furloughed to Pennsylvania to vote in the November election. This action, in addition to an amendment granting the privilege of military absentee voting, gave Lincoln a 20,000 majority in Pennsylvania.94

Andrew Curtin, as governor of the state, was responsible for the appointment of commissioners to collect the vote in 1864. Since the Governor was absent from Harrisburg because of illness, the selection of commissioners fell upon his Secretary of the Commonwealth, Eli Slifer. Curtin wanted to include some Democratic agents to avoid accusations of fraud in the election.95 However, the appointments still did not satisfy the Democrats, and election fraud accusations were widespread.96

Andrew Curtin’s policy in the Pennsylvania elections of 1861-64 seems to have been prompted by a genuine desire to sustain the Lincoln administration. Curtin identified himself with the Lincoln Republicans and in so doing assumed the responsibility of answering the criticisms of the national administration of the War in state campaigns as though they were his own. Lincoln did not demonstrate the same unflagging support of Curtin, although he seems to have understood the need to have Curtin on his side. Perhaps Lincoln’s lack of outspoken enthusiasm for Curtin in political campaigns was due to the President’s need to conciliate both the Cameron and the Curtin wings of the Pennsylvania Republicans. Despite the lack of evidence of close personal friendship between Curtin and Lincoln, it is certain that Lincoln regarded the success of Curtin’s party in Pennsylvania as vital to the success of his own administration. For, not only did Curtin command respect among Northern governors; he also represented the material and moral strength of one of the largest states in the Union.

[To be continued]

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93 Some interesting correspondence appears in the Slifer Papers regarding Cameron’s appointment as State Party Chairman.
94 Russell, 320.
95 Curtin, absent from Harrisburg, wrote to Eli Slifer concerning the appointment of the commissioners: “I must leave selection of agents to you and the delicate question of sending democrats [sic]. If the War Dep. will not I am still clear we must send a fair number through for them. We cannot afford to be connected with a fraudulent election.” Andrew Curtin, 3 Oct. 1864, letter to Eli Slifer. Slifer-Dill Papers.
96 Sandburg, III, 464.
West Chester Re
Aug 18, 63

To John Corvole

Dear Sir

The Curtin men are in high spirits, are very insolent & defiant! They abuse, jeer at, & otherwise abusing myself, and yet I refuse to notice Curtin in any shape in the paper. Curtin already is making his calculations for the Presidency. He is assuring his men here that he will be elected by a large majority that he "will not lose fifty votes in the West" that Reina is in position to
claim the presidency! That he is the man!
Relters were freely offered to-day in Rhode Island that he would be the next President! His fellow-travelers are clamoring for using the stolen money liberally!

Something must be done now, if at all! or we are lost! Crime stalks abroad with impunity! They play in the manner in which the people are blindly following the cry of "soldier's friend," raised to prevent an examination of the stories of his infancy!

What are you doing in the West?
When will you be East?

I want to run down to Washington about the middle of next week! Will you be in Philadelphia about that time?

Write me how matters look with you!

If Chase & Stanton will say the word the Union will crush him I do it on our own account without involving any one! He has sworn to crush the administration & I will disgrace them all if allowed to go on!
See John Williams
some of the leading men in the area— I see what is to be done!
A cap of 12 to 15,000 from our party vote will
win him! Can it be
done?

I do not know certain which Cameron is doing
but think he is not
doing all he can or
was promised!

Burn up this letter when
you need it.

Write at once to Keens-
Chester—I will be there
May the balance of the week
then come gall

John Le \* of Punita

Reprinted from the original in the archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.