A detailed oil painting of Andrew Gregg Curtin, a man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit and a white cravat. The background is dark and textured.

Andrew Gregg Curtin (1815–1894)  
—whose portrait was painted  
posthumously in 1904 by Philadelphia  
artist Albert Rosenthal (1863–1939)—  
was the two-term Republican governor  
of Pennsylvania, from 1861 to 1867.

# PENNSYLVANIA'S WAR GOVERNOR

*William C. Kashatus*

PHMC THE STATE MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA

Andrew Gregg Curtin

**1815**

April 22, born in  
Bellefonte, Centre  
County.

**1835**

September, began study  
of law with Judge John  
Reed at Dickinson  
College, Carlisle.

**1837**

Admitted to practice  
law before state bar.  
Opened law practice  
in Bellefonte with  
John Blanchard.



On September 14, 1862, Pennsylvania's Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin invited the governors of the northern and border states to a meeting to be held at Altoona, Blair County, in ten days. The purpose of the meeting that became known as the Loyal War Governors' Conference—or, simply, the Altoona Conference—was to “take measures for a more active support of the government's prosecution of the Civil War.”

It was a critical time for the North. Between June 25 and July 1, 1862, the Union Army suffered a setback and lost 16,000 soldiers during the Peninsular Campaign in southeastern Virginia—despite the loss of 25,000 Confederate troops. Confederate General Robert E. Lee's troops were preparing to invade Maryland, ultimately intending to attack Washington, D.C. Abolitionist pressure was mounting on President Abraham Lincoln to emancipate and arm slaves and to remove his commanding officer, General George B. McClellan (1826–1885) who, according to critics, refused to pursue the enemy. Morale of the Union troops was dangerously low. Volunteering had virtually ceased and no national conscription law existed to replenish the Army of the Potomac. The civilian population of the North was beginning to despair that the battleground would shift to their farms and cities. Given these dire circumstances, Lincoln believed that it would be perilous to issue a call for additional troops.

Curtin realized the importance of restoring public confidence in the Union's war effort as well as in Lincoln's leadership. He also believed that only the governors of the remaining states loyal to the Union could fulfill that obligation. They had enlisted volunteers to fight for the Union, organized regiments, commissioned officers, and sent the soldiers off to the front line of battle. As a result, the governors were among the president's most trusted advisers in all matters pertaining to the war. However, there was no assurance that they would be able to reach a consensus on how to prosecute the war.



FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD: ITS ORIGIN, CONSTRUCTION, CONDITION, AND CONNECTIONS (1875)

Altoona's workshops for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and a bustling train station made the adjacent Logan House Hotel (to the left) a desired venue for the Loyal War Governors' Conference in September 1862.

While the northern and border state governors were committed to preserving the Union, strong differences of opinion arose over the issues of emancipation of slaves, the confiscation of Southern property, the suspension of *habeas corpus*, and the Union Army's warfare tactics. Curtin hoped to initiate a candid exchange in order to reconcile these differences. His cause was furthered eight days before the Altoona Conference when, on September 17, 1862, the Army of the Potomac checked Lee's advance at the Battle of Antietam in Maryland. Lincoln seized the occasion to issue the initial Emancipation Proclamation five days later, on September 22.

When the governors met at Altoona's grand Logan House Hotel—built in 1854 by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and dubbed “the

Mansion in the Wilderness”—on Monday and Tuesday, September 24–25, Curtin mediated disputes and, assisted by Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts, drafted an address for adoption by those in attendance. Accordingly, the governors “pledged their most loyal and cordial support” to President Lincoln. They also expressed their “heartfelt gratitude” for the Emancipation Proclamation and urged the president to create a “force of 100,000 reserve troops.” The governors urged the president to replace General McClellan as the commander of the Union forces, a recommendation that Lincoln carried out six weeks later. The Altoona Conference was an important factor in buttressing Lincoln's decision to emancipate the slaves, solidify northern unity, and help boost the morale of the Union Army.

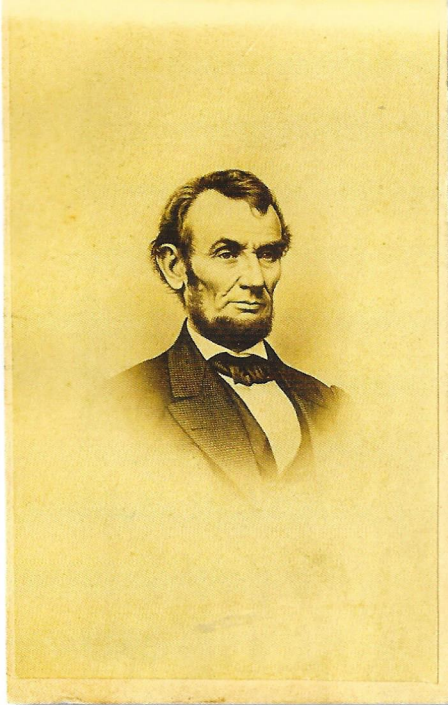
**1844** / May 30, married Katherine Irvine Wilson.

**1848** / November, served as presidential elector.

**1854** / November, served as presidential elector.

**1854** / May, declined to run for governor to support James Pollock.





MG-218/PA STATE ARCHIVES

President Abraham Lincoln considered Governor Curtin to be one of his most important allies in rallying Northern support during the Civil War.

Serving as Pennsylvania's governor throughout the Civil War, Curtin quickly became one of Lincoln's most trusted advisers. When the war broke out in 1861, he was the first governor to dispatch troops to defend the nation's capital. He sponsored taxes to finance the war, advanced the recruitment, conscription, and training of soldiers, and guided key efforts to supply, transport, and care for troops in the field. Curtin's efforts also resulted in the creation of a national cemetery at Gettysburg for Union soldiers, as well as a system of state schools for war orphans.

Born on April 22, 1815, in Bellefonte, Centre County, Curtin was the son of Roland Curtin (1764–1850), a Scots-Irish immigrant, and his second wife, Jane Gregg (1791–1854), daughter of Andrew Gregg (1755–1835), a powerful Pennsylvania politician and president pro tempore of the United States Senate. Roland Curtin had been educated in Paris before immigrating to the United

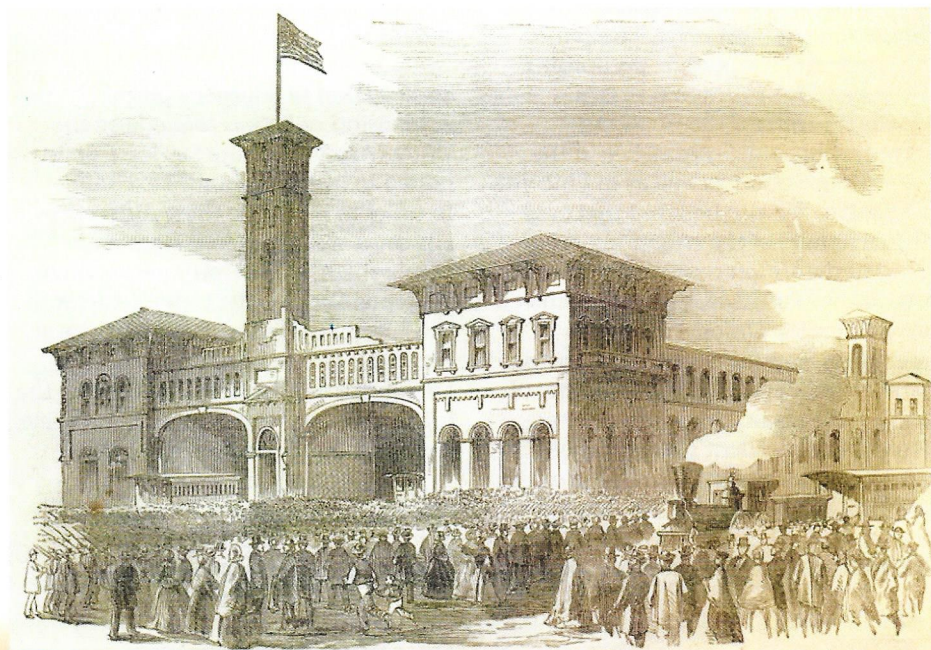
States. In central Pennsylvania, he established himself as a storekeeper. He became coroner of Centre County in 1803 and elected sheriff in 1806. He held major interests in iron foundries, erected a forge at Eagle Works with Moses Boggs (1756–1833), and became its sole proprietor in 1815. Ten years later, Curtin purchased a grist and saw mill at what was subsequently named Curtin Station.

The family highly valued education for their seven children. Andrew Curtin attended preparatory school, first in Harrisburg, and then the Milton Academy in Lycoming County, where he completed course work under the tutelage of the Reverend David M. Kirkpatrick (1805–1834). He returned to Bellefonte to study law with his mother's cousin, William W. Potter, and completed his legal studies at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Cumberland County, under Judge John Reed (1786–1850), founder of the Dickinson Law School. Admitted to the state bar in 1837, Curtin opened a criminal law practice with John Blanchard in Bellefonte. In 1844, he married Katherine Irvine Wilson, with whom (like his parents) he had seven children.

During the 1840s, Curtin gained a reputation as an excellent orator who supported Whig presidential candidates. He canvassed Pennsylvania for Henry Clay's campaign and was on the state ticket for presidential elector in 1848, and again in 1852. Some Whigs favored the idea of Curtin running for governor in 1854, but he declined in order to support the candidacy of James Pollock (1810–1890). Curtin had hoped to receive an appointment to the United States Senate from the state legislature. Simon Cameron (1799–1889), however, a cunning state senator, dashed his hopes.

After Pollock won the gubernatorial election, Cameron ingratiated himself with the new legislature, widened his appeal among supporters of minor political parties such as the Whig and Know Nothing parties and Free-Soil Democrats, and shrewdly endorsed policies important to various interests. In February 1855, the state legislature selected Cameron for senator over Curtin—by a single vote. Shortly afterwards, Curtin discovered a grave discrepancy: there were more votes cast than there had been legislators present.

From dawn until late at night, trains brought thousands of recruits to Harrisburg's railroad station during the Civil War. In addition to Camp Curtin, the nearby State Capitol building's grounds, house and senate chambers, and a courthouse were turned into barracks.



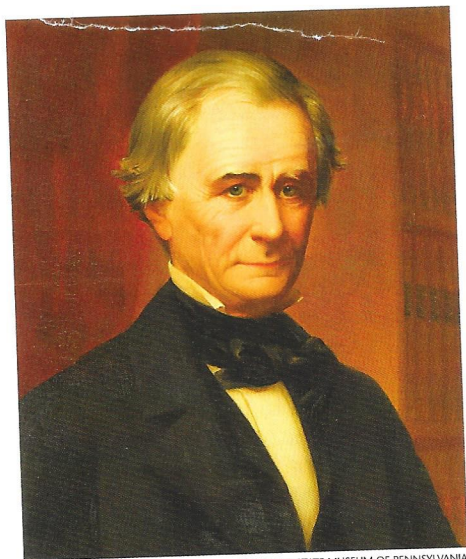
**1855** / October, defeated by William Bigler for state senator.

**1855–1858** / Served as secretary of the Commonwealth under Governor James Pollock.

**1858** / Elected captain of the Bellefonte Fencibles, which he helped organize.



Bitter charges and counter-charges flew between the two candidates and their supporters. The most serious accusation came from two dozen legislators who publicly accused Cameron of bribery. A deadlock continued until October 1855, when the legislature named former governor William Bigler (1814–1880) to the U.S. Senate. Cameron eventually won the appointment to the U.S. Senate in 1857, but the incident created a deep-seated animosity between Curtin and Cameron that malingered throughout their lives.



PHMC THE STATE MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA

Simon Cameron served as a Pennsylvania U.S. senator, President Lincoln's secretary of war from 1861 to 1862, and as a powerful Republican Party machine leader following the Civil War. This mid-nineteenth-century portrait is by York County painter John J. Libhart (1806–1883).

Meanwhile, Curtin accepted Governor Pollock's appointment as secretary of the Commonwealth, which included the responsibility of superintendent of public schools. One of his landmark innovations was the establishment of the state system of normal schools for training teachers. These institutions would become, in 1983, the fourteen state-owned universities of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Historians credit

Curtin for the instructional foundations of Pennsylvania's free schools.

In 1860, Curtin ran for governor of Pennsylvania. He was a candidate of the People's Party, comprised of Republicans allied with Whigs, who favored Republican policies of high tariffs and free public land. He defeated his Democratic opponent Henry D. Foster (1808–1880), carrying the election by more than 30,000 votes. Inaugurated on January 15, 1861, Governor Curtin placed Pennsylvania squarely on the side of the Union. "No one who knows the history of Pennsylvania and her people can justly charge us with hostility to our brethren of other States," he said in his inaugural address, presaging the sentiments of Abraham Lincoln at his first inaugural two months later. "We regard them as friends and fellow countrymen," Curtin continued, "in whose welfare we feel a kindred interest; and we recognize in their broadest extent all our constitutional obligations to them."

Curtin also noted, "Ours is a national government . . . [based] on a compact to which all people of the United States are party. . . . No part of the people, no State, nor combination of States, can voluntarily secede from the Union, nor absolve themselves from their obligations to it." Pennsylvania would "never acquiesce in the conspiracy of secession . . . [nor] assent to a doctrine which involves the destruction of the national government." Curtin committed Pennsylvania's "faithful and active support" to the national authorities "to stay the progress of anarchy and enforce the laws."

His victory in the election of 1860 was a mixed blessing. The American Civil War placed extraordinary demands on him. His responsibilities as governor included a major role in the leadership of the Commonwealth's newly formed Republican Party, a role he reluctantly shared with Cameron; the 1860 presidential election further strained the uneasy alliance between the two politicians.



FROM ANDREW GREGG CURTIN: HIS LIFE AND SERVICES (1895)

Andrew Curtin, at the age of forty-three, as he appeared when elected governor in 1860. He led the newly formed Pennsylvania Republican Party and decisively committed the Commonwealth to the North in the Civil War.

1860

May, instrumental in securing Republican presidential nomination for Abraham Lincoln. Campaigned and won November election to governor's office.

1861

January 15, inaugurated governor.  
March 4, Lincoln inaugurated nation's sixteenth president.

1861

April 12, Civil War began with Confederate firing on Fort Sumter.  
April 15, President Lincoln called for 75,000 troops to defend the Union.  
April 18, Curtin sent five companies of men to Washington, D.C.  
April 18, Camp Curtin opened in Harrisburg to train troops.



# LINCOLN, HAMLIN, AND CURTIN!



The friends of Lincoln, Hamlin and Curtin, Will meet at  
**Howellville, Tredyffrin Tp.,**  
**ON THURSDAY EVENING, 30TH OF AUGUST, 1860,**  
 For the purpose of forming a Lincoln & Hamlin Club.  
 TO BE ADDRESSED BY  
**H. W. CARRUTHERS, ESQ., & CAPT. JAMES GIVIN.**

August 14, 1860.

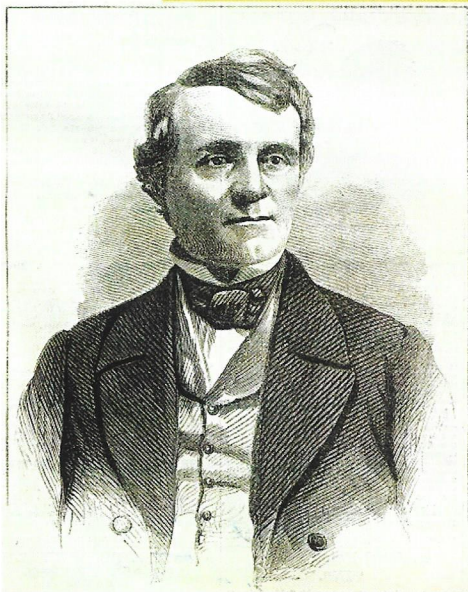
Printed at the Village Record Office, West Chester, Pa.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

considered Curtin an obstacle to consolidating his political base for a future run for the White House. Mutual distrust and difficulty in working together affected them during the Civil War.

When war broke out with the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor on April 12, 1861, Curtin was the first governor to respond to Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteer soldiers. He had met with the president in Washington, D.C., four days earlier and sensed the inevitable. Curtin hurried back to Harrisburg and requested the state legislature to take steps to strengthen Pennsylvania's military preparedness. After the attack on Fort Sumter, he appealed to the citizens of Pennsylvania to volunteer to help preserve the Union. Almost immediately, men from throughout the Commonwealth converged on Harrisburg to offer their services. Curtin raised five companies of men and sent them to Washington, D.C., on April 18. A grateful Lincoln greeted these so-called "First Defenders," the first combat units raised for the war, and assigned them to guard the U.S. Capitol. It was the first of many invaluable contributions the Pennsylvania governor made to the war effort and earned him the trust and admiration of the new president.

Curtin met with Lincoln at least three times in April, once in May, and again in September 1861. They discussed troops, money, and political support. Realizing the need to train and outfit a sizeable militia, Curtin constructed the nation's first Union military camp. Situated on the grounds of the Dauphin County Agricultural Society on the northern outskirts of Harrisburg, the compound, appropriately named Camp Curtin, opened on April 18, 1861. More than 300,000 men completed their training at the eighty-acre facility, making it the largest federal camp during the war. In addition to Pennsylvania regiments, troops from Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York,



HARPER'S WEEKLY (JUNE 6, 1863)

A sketch of Governor Curtin was published in a national newspaper eleven days before he accepted his party's nomination for a second term as governor.

A campaign poster for Abraham Lincoln, Hannibal Hamlin, and Andrew Curtin appeared 1860 in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County.

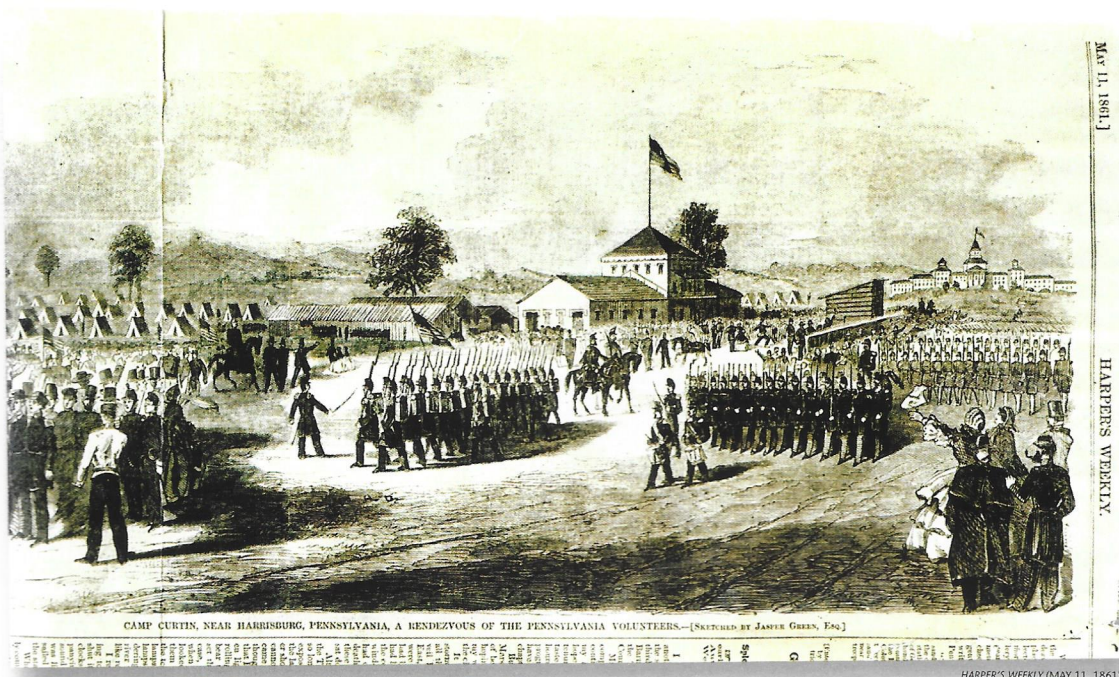
At the Republican Convention in Chicago, Pennsylvania's delegates were divided between the supporters of Cameron, who was seeking the presidency, and those of Curtin, who backed Lincoln. The delegation eventually pledged its support to Lincoln, who won the party's nomination. Lincoln, hoping to mend political differences, appointed Cameron as secretary of war, a decision that Curtin ardently discouraged. Cameron, still entertaining presidential aspirations of his own, patronized the new president, whom he considered ill-suited for the nation's highest office. Cameron also

**1861** / April–September, met with President Lincoln five times.

**1862** / September, met with Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew and President Lincoln.

**1862** / September 24–25, Convened Loyal War Governors' Conference in Altoona. The Altoona Conference endorsed the Emancipation Proclamation.





Camp Curtin (left) in Harrisburg was the Union's largest Civil War military training camp. A statue of the camp's namesake (below), Governor Andrew G. Curtin, at the site of the former camp reads, in part, "In memory of more than 300,000 soldiers . . . the flower of the nation's youth . . . who passed into and out of this camp to the field of battle."

HARPER'S WEEKLY (MAY 11, 1861)

Ohio, and Wisconsin, as well as the U.S. Regular Army, used Camp Curtin. Harrisburg's location on major railroad lines made it an ideal location for moving men and supplies to the armies in the field. The camp and surrounding area also saw service as a supply depot, hospital, and prisoner of war camp.

Throughout his first term in office, Curtin sponsored taxes to finance the war and cooperated in logistical, recruiting, and conscription measures, although he kept the Commonwealth's debt low and bickered about certain state prerogatives attached to the massive units Pennsylvania integrated into the larger Union Army. Fortunately, Curtin's ongoing conflict with Secretary of War Cameron ended in January 1862 when Lincoln replaced him with Edwin M. Stanton (1814–1869). Cameron became embroiled in a conflict of interest when he awarded military contracts to two railroads in which he held a personal financial interest.

In early September 1862, Curtin and Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew visited Lincoln in Washington, D.C. The president informed them that he was preparing a proclamation to emancipate the slaves and asked if he

should wait to issue it until all the governors of the loyal states requested such a measure. Curtin insisted that Lincoln issue the proclamation first, and that he should convene a meeting of the governors of the northern and border states and draft a public address in strong support of the measure. By the time the Loyal War Governors' Conference commenced in Altoona later that month, Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Although several governors hesitated to endorse the measure, the majority favored emancipation. After several hours of deliberation, participants directed Curtin and Andrew to draft an address in support of the president's action. Curtin was the first to sign the document, followed by all but one of the twelve governors and one gubernatorial representative who attended the conference. Governor Augustus W. Bradford (1806–1881) of Maryland declined ratification, fearing that he would be politically and financially ruined. The following afternoon, Curtin presented the signed document to a grateful Lincoln, giving the president a mandate to prosecute the war more vigorously.



PHOTO BY JOHN BOYD HENDERSON

1862

Suffered nervous breakdown.

1863

June 17, accepted Republican Party's nomination to run for second term.

1863

July 10, visited Gettysburg Battlefield. Directed David Wills to create a cemetery for Union soldiers slain at Gettysburg.



Curtin was proving to be one of the president's most indispensable allies. So arduous were the demands of office during the war, the governor suffered a nervous breakdown. During increasingly frequent periods when Curtin was incapacitated, Secretary of the Commonwealth Eli Slifer (1818–1888) handled governmental affairs. Concerned for the governor's poor health, Lincoln, near the end of Curtin's first term, offered him a diplomatic position abroad, but the governor refused, citing his inability to do justice to the post, and subsequently intended to withdraw from running for a second term. Instead, Curtin encouraged the leaders of Pennsylvania's Republican Party to choose General William B. Franklin (1823–1903) as his successor. Ironically, Franklin was a Democrat but, to Curtin, his fierce commitment to the war effort and his impressive military record made him a logical choice. Curtin was determined to unite all political parties in the Commonwealth in support of the war. Although the competing factions of the Republican Party greatly respected Franklin, when the Republican Convention met on June 17, 1863, Curtin received the nomination for a second term. He accepted.

The gubernatorial election of 1863 was a referendum on Pennsylvania's support of Lincoln and the prosecution of the Civil War. The Democrats, dominated by anti-war Copperheads, exploited war weariness and repeated Union defeats, particularly in Virginia. They drew up resolutions in the state general assembly condemning the president's actions as unconstitutional, including the Emancipation Proclamation. They also condemned the arbitrary arrests of the Democratic editors of the *Harrisburg Patriot and Union* and the *Philadelphia Evening Journal* for criticizing the Lincoln administration and imprisonment without a preliminary hearing. For election of a Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice, the Democrats endorsed George W. Woodward (1809–1875), a



FROM HISTORY OF THAT PART OF THE SUSQUEHANNA AND JUNIATA VALLEYS (1886)

Chester County native Eli Slifer served as secretary of the Commonwealth from 1861 to 1867 under Governor Curtin and temporarily assumed gubernatorial duties while Curtin recovered from a nervous breakdown.

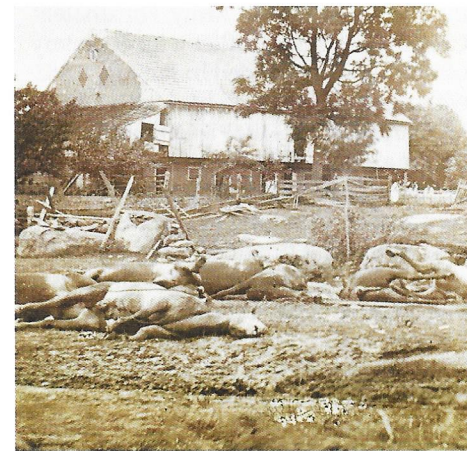
stalwart opponent of state conscription and the Lincoln administration. Franklin, who had been Curtin's choice to succeed him, was considered unacceptable by many Democratic leaders who wanted the war ended by compromise.

Curtin shrewdly diffused the Democratic Party's criticism of the arbitrary arrests by maintaining that Congress alone had power to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*. He also enhanced his chances for victory by arranging for Pennsylvania's civil servants working in the nation's capital to be given a fifteen-day leave, enabling them to return home to vote. In October, Curtin was reelected governor by a margin of 15,000 votes, while the Republicans gained control of both houses of the state legislature, ensuring the vigorous prosecution of the war.

During the 1863 election campaign, Curtin was involved in

the Gettysburg Campaign. Working with Union officers General Darius N. Couch (1822–1897) and Major Granville O. Haller (1819–1897), he helped map out a strategy to delay General Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army and prevent it from crossing the Susquehanna River. As a result, the Union's Major General George Gordon Meade (1815–1872), a Pennsylvania officer whom Curtin had recommended for promotion to brigadier general, defeated Lee at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863. Seven days later, on July 10, as the Confederate Army staggered back into Virginia, Curtin visited Gettysburg.

Curtin found the Adams County battlefield appalling. Dead horses cluttered the streets and fields; human corpses remained unburied, or partially buried, with arms and legs protruding from the ground; and lime covered the streets, coating human and animal remains in order to reduce infection. The stench of death and decay was overwhelming. With more than 10,000 soldiers who had been killed or mortally wounded during the grisly three-day engagement, there was a pressing need to bury the bodies. Before he departed Gettysburg, Curtin appointed David Wills (1831–1890), a wealthy Gettysburg attorney, to spearhead the creation of a national cemetery for slain Union soldiers. After he returned to Harrisburg, Curtin wrote to the governors of the Union states to request that they bury the soldiers who had fallen in battle at Gettysburg in the new cemetery.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS/PHOTO BY TIMOTHY H. O'SULLIVAN

1863

October, granted leave to Pennsylvania civil servants in Washington, D.C., to return home to vote.  
October, reelected by a margin of 15,000 votes over Democrat George Woodward.

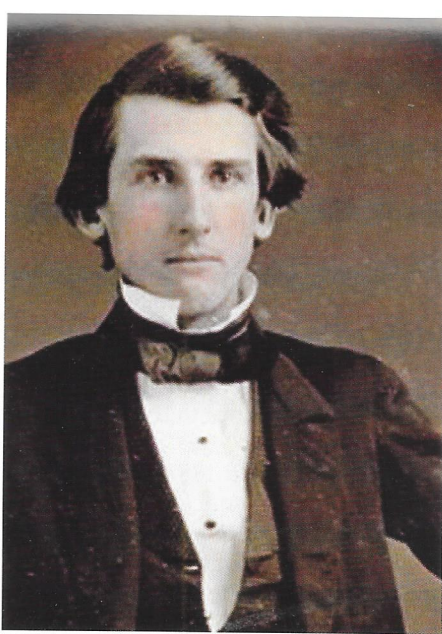
1863

November 19, Lincoln delivered Gettysburg Address.

1864

June, established Pennsylvania Soldiers' Orphans Schools.





THE DAVID WILLS HOUSE

Gettysburg attorney David Wills, from an 1856 portrait, spearheaded the development of a national cemetery for fallen Union soldiers at Gettysburg.

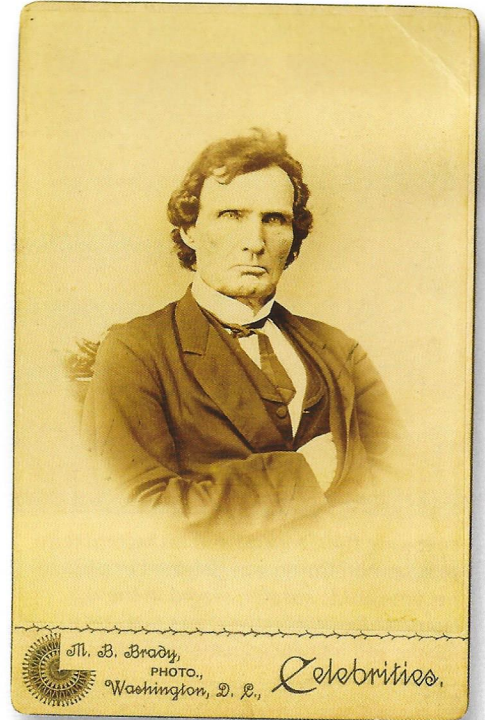
With the dedication ceremony scheduled for November 19, 1863, Wills invited Edward Everett (1794–1865), the most noted orator of that period, to serve as the featured speaker. Curtin undoubtedly insisted that Lincoln be invited to attend. In a letter dated November 2, Wills asked Lincoln to make “a few appropriate remarks,” and to join Everett and Curtin as his houseguests on the evening of November 18. Lincoln accepted the invitation.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS/PHOTO BY TIMOTHY H. O'SULLIVAN

While the president wanted to honor the soldiers who had fallen at Gettysburg, there were also political reasons to attend the ceremony. Pennsylvania and Curtin had been supportive of his war policies. He needed to cultivate the support of Thaddeus Stevens (1792–1868), a Radical Republican and one of the most powerful members of the U.S. House of Representatives, who lived in Gettysburg. Lincoln and Stevens were often at odds with each other. Since Stevens was the chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, which oversaw all appropriations bills to finance the war, Lincoln could not afford to alienate him. What Lincoln did not foresee when he traveled to Gettysburg is that the American people would remember him for one of the greatest speeches in their history—the Gettysburg Address. While Everett first spoke for two hours, Lincoln’s speech took only two minutes.

Curtin’s health failed again after his second inauguration. Increasingly concerned about his condition, Lincoln ordered a naval vessel to carry Curtin to Havana, Cuba, where he spent the remainder of winter 1864 recuperating. After Curtin returned to Harrisburg in mid-March, the logistical demands of the Civil War once again consumed him. He was admired not only for his unshakable support of Lincoln and the Union cause but also for his care of both soldiers in the field and those who had been wounded. For his compassion,



MG-485/PA STATE ARCHIVES

Famous Civil War photographer Matthew Brady (1822–1896) photographed a portrait of Pennsylvania’s radical Republican Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1848 to 1853 and from 1859 to 1868.

When Governor Curtin arrived at Gettysburg following the great battle, he described the scene as appalling, with the bodies of soldiers (left) and horses (facing page, bottom) yet unburied and the “stench of death and decay” overwhelming.

1866

Spearheaded repeal of State Tonnage Tax.

1867

January 15, left governor’s office at end of second term.

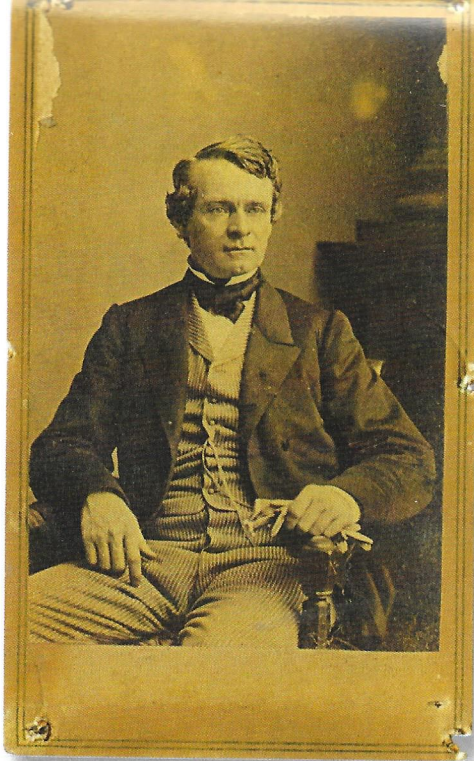
1869

January, defeated by Simon Cameron for U.S. Senate seat. April, named Minister to Russia by President Ulysses S. Grant, where he served until 1872.

1872

May, supported Grant’s Liberal Republican Party opponent Horace Greeley for the presidency.





MG-218/PA STATE ARCHIVES

Following the Civil War and his second term as governor, Curtin was defeated in a bid to become a U.S. senator, served in the U.S. House of Representatives, was minister to Russia, and influenced national politics.

With a sense of obligation toward widows and orphans of Union soldiers killed in the Civil War, Governor Curtin established the Pennsylvania Soldiers' Orphans Schools. Among them was the Soldier's Orphan Institute (below) at Twenty-third and Parrish Streets, Philadelphia.



FROM PENNSYLVANIA SOLDIERS' ORPHANS SCHOOLS (1877)

he earned the gratitude of soldiers and their families who affectionately called him "the Soldiers' Friend." He organized the Pennsylvania State Agency in Washington, D.C., and a branch in Nashville, Tennessee, to provide support for volunteer militia. He continued to guide key efforts for the war through supplies, transport, and support personnel. By the war's end, Pennsylvania had contributed 215 regiments, independent batteries, emergency militia and the United States Colored Troops, and was responsible for approximately 427,000 enlistments.

After the war, Curtin established the Pennsylvania Soldiers' Orphans Schools to aid and educate children whose fathers had died for the Union cause. He led the repeal of the State Tonnage Tax, helping the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to become the nation's largest transportation system. Despite these measures, his political influence ebbed during his second administration. When his term expired in 1867, Simon Cameron controlled Pennsylvania's Republican Party. Nevertheless, Curtin's administration launched Republican control over the governor's office for more than a century, until the 1955 election of Governor George M. Leader (1918-). Only two Democratic Party challengers, Robert Emory Pattison (1850-1904), who served two terms, and George H. Earle (1890-1974), interrupted this streak of domination by twenty Republican governors.

In 1869, Cameron defeated Curtin in yet another bid to serve in the U.S. Senate. As a consolation, President Ulysses S. Grant named him minister to Russia where he served until 1872. Despite the appointment, Curtin spoke out against the corruption of the president's administration. Curtin supported Grant's opponent, politician and reformer Horace Greeley (1811-1872) for president in 1872. After failing to obtain the nomination for the vice presidency at Greeley's Liberal Republican Party convention, Curtin switched his allegiance to the Democratic Party.

Between 1881 and 1887, Curtin served three terms, as a Democrat, in the U.S. House of Representatives, during which he served as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He retired to his home in Bellefonte, described as a stone house with the "air of a castle, among the books of his library." The tall, slender, gray-haired, gray-eyed former governor, whose affable manner attracted a circle of eminent leaders, died on October 7, 1894. Three days later, he received an impressive funeral with a military escort of five companies and led by a host of Pennsylvania's distinguished Civil War generals and ranking officers. Dignitaries, notable guests, and mourners from all parts of the Commonwealth lined the community's streets to pay their last respects to a native son.

At ten o'clock in the morning, the Centre County Bar Association conducted a memorial service at the courthouse. Among the several eulogies delivered that morning, Colonel Alexander K. McClure (1828-1909), a dear friend of Curtin's for nearly a half century, gave a most poignant tribute. "When the sun passes beyond your mountain and sets in the far west, we call it night," said McClure, standing over the flag-draped coffin. "The night is come, but throughout the long watches of the night, the god of day throws back his refulgence upon the stars and light is eternal, and so of a life like that of Governor Curtin. We bear his body to the tomb today, but we bury not his memory. We bury not his achievements, his records, his examples. They will remain with us, lustrous as the silver stars of night, that

1872-1873

Served as delegate to the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention.

1874

January, Pennsylvania Constitution of 1874 took effect.

1881-1887

Served three terms in Congress as Democratic U.S. Representative.

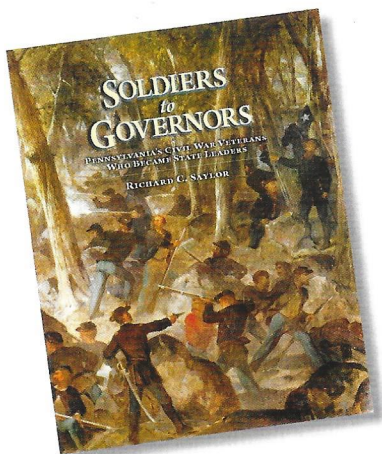


never permit darkness to come upon the earth. And so from generation to generation in Pennsylvania will the memory of this man endure. Wherever there shall be the altar and worshipper of free government, there will be the lovers and worshippers of the memory of Andrew Gregg Curtin."

When the funeral cortège arrived at the Union Cemetery gravesite, the Pennsylvania National Guard fired three volleys and, as Curtin's body was laid to rest, a bugler sounded "Taps," written by Union Army Brigadier General Daniel A. Butterfield (1831–1901) in July 1862, a final farewell and a moving tribute to Pennsylvania's indefatigable and courageous war governor.

"Pennsylvania's War Governor" Andrew Gregg Curtin is honored by four identical statues, designed by Cyrus Edwin Dallin (1861–1944), erected after his death: one at the War Memorial on the grounds of the Centre County Court House in Bellefonte, one adorning the Pennsylvania State Monument at Gettysburg, one in the rotunda of the State Capitol, and one at the site of Camp Curtin in Harrisburg. These monuments are enduring reminders of a man who was called by history to protect the public trust. Curtin accepted that great call with a single-minded devotion to his state and to his nation, even if it meant the loss of health. 🇺🇸

*William C. Kashatus, Paoli, is a regular contributor to Pennsylvania Heritage.*



## TRAVEL TIPS

In 1810, Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin's father, Roland Curtin, purchased land near Milesburg, Centre County, for the family home and, in 1818, built the Eagle Iron Works. Although only sixty of the iron plantation's original 30,000 acres remain, tours of *Curtin Village's* ironmaster's mansion, restored iron works, and other structures are available. Visit [www.boggstownship.org/curtin\\_village.shtml](http://www.boggstownship.org/curtin_village.shtml) on the Web to learn more.

In Harrisburg, *The State Museum of Pennsylvania* and the adjacent *Pennsylvania State Archives* hold thousands of American Civil War artifacts, paintings, documents, letters, and photographs. Learn more about these collections by visiting [www.statemuseumpa.org](http://www.statemuseumpa.org) or [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us) on the Web.

The *National Civil War Museum*, also in Harrisburg, exhibits weaponry, uniforms, tools, and documents, in addition to featuring interactive displays, war maps, and films. Visit the Web at [www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org](http://www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org).

When touring the *Gettysburg National Military Park*, on the Web at [www.nps.gov/gett](http://www.nps.gov/gett), visit the nearby *David Wills House* where President Lincoln stayed the night before he delivered the Gettysburg Address. For more information, see [www.davidwillshouse.org](http://www.davidwillshouse.org) on the Web.

Other Civil War-related destinations include the *Grand Army of the Republic Museum*, ([www.garmuslib.org](http://www.garmuslib.org)) Philadelphia; *Chambersburg Heritage Center* ([www.chambersburg.org](http://www.chambersburg.org)); *Shippensburg Historical Society* ([www.shippensburghistory.org](http://www.shippensburghistory.org)); *U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center*, ([www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec)) Carlisle; and *Adams County Historical Society*, ([www.achs-pa.org/](http://www.achs-pa.org/)) Gettysburg.



FROM ANDREW GREGG CURTIN: HIS LIFE AND SERVICES (1895)

An impressive public funeral for Andrew Gregg Curtin (above) was held October 10, 1894, in Curtin's native Bellefonte, Centre County. Dignitaries, war veterans, graduates of orphans' schools, and thousands of citizens witnessed the cortege led by a military escort.

*Soldiers to Governors: Pennsylvania's Civil War Veterans Who Became State Leaders*, a lavishly illustrated book written by Richard C. Saylor and published by PHMC, will soon be available for purchase at [www.pabookstore.com](http://www.pabookstore.com).

### FOR FURTHER READING

Bradley, Edwin Stanley. *Simon Cameron, Lincoln's Secretary of War: A Political Biography*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966.

Hoch, Bradley R. *The Lincoln Trail in Pennsylvania*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.

Miller, William J. *Training of an Army: Camp Curtin and the North's Civil War*. Shippensburg, Pa.: White Man Publishing, 1990.

Saylor, Richard C. *Soldiers to Governors: Pennsylvania's Civil War Veterans Who Became State Leaders*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2010.

1887

March, retired to Bellefonte in poor health.

1894

October 7, Died at home at the age of 79.