

HISTORY
OF
CENTRE AND CLINTON
COUNTIES,
PENNSYLVANIA.

BY
JOHN BLAIR LINN.

ILLUSTRATED.

LOUIS H. EVERTS.
1883.

PRESS OF J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., PHILADELPHIA.

CURTIN, HON. A. G., son of Roland Curtin, Sr., was born in Bellefonte, April 22, 1819. He completed an academic course of education at the academy of Rev. David Kirkpatrick, D.D., in Milton, studied law under Hon. W. W. Potter in Bellefonte, completing a course of legal study under Judge John Reed in the Law Department of Dickinson College at Carlisle.

He was admitted to the bar at April term of 1837. In 1840 he took an active part in politics in what was known as the Harrison campaign, and in 1844 canvassed the State for Henry Clay for President. In 1848 and 1852 he was on the State ticket of Presidential electors. On the 17th of January, 1855, he was commissioned by Governor James Pollock Secretary of the Commonwealth, which position also included that of superintendent of the public schools.

Progressive in every station he reached, his superintendence of State education has as one of its landmarks the institution of the system of normal schools, his recommendations and his annual reports culminating in the passage of the act of May 20, 1857, "to provide for the due training of teachers for the common schools of the State."

In 1860, Mr. Curtin was nominated by the Republican party as their candidate for Governor, and elected over Henry D. Foster by a majority of thirty-two thousand one hundred and seven votes. His administration of the gubernatorial office during the dark days of the republic made an imperishable name for his family, and added historic grandeur to the annals of our Commonwealth. The foresight which impelled him to refuse to disband the overflowing volunteer regiments which the patriotism of Pennsylvania contributed on the call of the President, and his prompt application to the Legislature for authority to organize them into a corps, afterwards the famous "Pennsylvania Reserves," saved the national government imperiled by the disaster of Bull Run.

The addresses he made when presenting flags to the Pennsylvania regiments as they went forth to fight for the Union will only be forgotten when the last volley is fired over the last Pennsylvania veteran of the war. Those two hundred and fifteen battle-flags, bearing the ægis of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, came back blood-stained, tattered, and torn, but never disgraced upon any battle-field of the republic.

Governor Curtin's ever-enduring memorial, however, in connection with the war is the orphan schools for the children of those who gave their lives that the Union might live. Recurring to his promise to the soldiers, as thousands of men stood before him for the last time, that Pennsylvania never would forget or neglect them or theirs, and that their children should be the children of the State, he clung to that purpose with a tenacity worthy of such a grand and noble cause.

Amid his ceaseless care for the soldiers on the field and in the hospital he never forgot "those who were left at home by the gallant fellows who had gone forward." It was the grand undertone of his magnificent speech in the Academy of Music, at Philadelphia: "Let the widow and her dependent offspring in fact and in truth be the children of the State, and let the mighty people of this great Commonwealth nurture and maintain them." In January, 1864, in his annual message, he brought the subject to the attention of the Legislature in the memorable words, "I commend to the prompt attention of the Legislature the subject of the relief of the poor orphans of our soldiers who have given or shall give their lives to the country during this crisis. In my opinion their maintenance and education should be provided for by the State. Failing other natural friends of ability, they should be honorably received and fostered as the children of the Commonwealth."

Failing in getting through the Legislature a proper bill, which had been matured with great care, the Governor started with the noble donation of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company of fifty thousand dollars, and laid the foundation for the soldiers' orphans' schools, a work of beneficence, righteousness, and justice which will keep Governor Curtin's memory fragrant for ages to come, the good results of which, felt all through time, the judgment day only will fully reveal.

Governor Curtin's health was much broken by arduous service during his first term, and President Lincoln tendered him a foreign mission, which it was his intention to accept, but having been renominated for Governor, and the people of the State being unwilling to part with their war Governor, he filled out a second term of the gubernatorial office.

In 1869 he was appointed by President Grant minister to Russia, and returned to this country in the fall of 1872. In 1873 he was a member of the convention which framed the present Constitution of

Pennsylvania, and now (1882) represents the Twentieth District in the House of Representatives of the United States.

As a popular speaker, Governor Curtin has few equals. Thoroughly versed in the political history of the State and the nation, extensively acquainted with public men, familiar with the business interests and wants of the country, a fine voice, happy delivery, a keen sense of the humorous and ridiculous, of handsome person and commanding presence, his speeches always tell upon great popular audiences, and as a legislator in Congress he has filled the expectation of his friends, and taken rank among its foremost statesmen.

COMMEMORATIVE

BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

— OF —

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA,

INCLUDING THE COUNTIES OF

Centre, Clearfield, Jefferson and Clarion,

CONTAINING

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF PROMINENT AND REPRESENTATIVE
CITIZENS, AND OF MANY OF THE EARLY SETTLED FAMILIES.

— ILLUSTRATED —

CHICAGO:
J. H. BEERS & CO.
1898.

tine during the Reign of Terror. He came first to Philipsburg, now in Centre county, then started a store at Milesburg as early as March, 1797, and was a resident of Bellefonte, keeping store in 1800. He was coroner of the county in 1803; sheriff in 1806, and soon after became extensively engaged in iron works, and became prominently identified with all public improvements made within the county. His death occurred in 1850, and that of the mother of Andrew G. Curtin, in 1854.

Andrew G. Curtin completed an academic course of education at the academy of Rev. David Kirkpatrick, D. D., in Milton, studied law under Hon. W. W. Potter, in Bellefonte, completing a course of legal study under Judge John Reed, in the Law Department of Dickinson College, at Carlisle. He was admitted to the Bar at the April term of 1837. In 1840 he took an active part in politics, in what was known as the Harrison campaign, and in 1844 canvassed the State for Henry Clay for President. In 1848 and 1852 he was on the State ticket for Presidential elector. On January 7, 1855, he was commissioned, by Gov. James Pollock, secretary of the Commonwealth, which position also included that of superintendent of the public schools. Progressive in every station he reached, his superintendence of State education has as one of its landmarks the institution of the system of normal schools, his recommendations and his annual reports culminating in the passage of the act of May 20, 1857, "To provide for the training of teachers for the common schools of the State."

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HON. ANDREW G. CURTIN, late of Bellefonte, Centre county, lawyer, governor, diplomat, member of the Constitutional Convention and member of Congress, was born at Bellefonte, April 22, 1819.

Roland Curtin, his father, was a native of Ireland, and was educated in Paris. His mother was Jane (Gregg) Curtin, the latter the daughter of Hon. Andrew Gregg. Roland Curtin, while a resident of Paris, narrowly escaped the guillo-

torn, but never disgraced upon any battle-field of the Republic.

Gov. Curtin's ever-enduring memorial, however, in connection with the war, is the Orphan School, for the children of those who gave their lives that the Union might live. Recurring to his promise to the soldiers, as thousands of men stood before him for the last time, that Pennsylvania would never forget or neglect them or theirs, and that their children should be the children of the State, he clung to that purpose with a tenacity worthy of such a grand and noble cause. Amid his ceaseless care of the soldiers on the field and in the hospital, he never forgot those who were left at home by the gallant fellows who had gone forward. It was the grand undertone of his magnificent speech in the Academy of Music, at Philadelphia, "let the widow and her dependent offspring in fact and in truth be the children of the State, and let the mighty people of the great Commonwealth nurture and maintain them." In January, 1864, in his annual message, he brought the subject to the attention of the Legislature in the memorable words: "I commend to the prompt attention of the Legislature the subject of the relief of the poor orphans of our soldiers who have given or shall give their lives for us during this crisis. In my opinion their maintenance and education should be provided for by the State. Failing other natural friends of ability, they should be honorably received and fostered as the children of the Commonwealth."

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vention for President. His connection with the liberal Republican movement, and the fact that his power and influence in the Republican party which were eminent while he remained in the country, but which had been broken by his absence, carried him into the Democratic party.

He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1872-3, and for a few years after had little to do with politics. When he wearied of the quiet of business life, and longed for politics, Gov. Curtin found a place in the Democratic party, and was nominated for Congress in 1878, when he was defeated by the Greenbackers. He was nominated again, in 1880, by the Democrats of his Congressional District, and was elected for two terms, retiring in 1887 near the close of his seventy-first year. In Congress Gov. Curtin was a faithful public servant, and attracted much public attention. At one time he was chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

After leaving Congress Gov. Curtin pursued a quiet life at his mountain home in Bellefonte, respected and esteemed by people of all classes. His familiar figure was an everyday sight on the streets of his native town. Tall, and erect as a youth, he would walk about for his daily exercise. Until within a short time previous to his death he kept up a lively interest in the politics of the county, and it was his influence that made his friend, Dr. J. H. Dobbins, the postmaster here under the former Cleveland administration, and not until he had given evidence that it would prove satisfactory would the department recommend the appointment of the present official. His time was occupied in looking after his business here and dispensing charities. No more pleasant hour could be spent than in a talk with the ex-Governor; he always loved young people, and gave them friendly counsel whenever an opportunity presented itself, and those who enjoyed his intimacy will cherish his charming personality as long as memory lasts. His death occurred October 7, 1894. He left to survive him his wife, a lady of a charming personality, a daughter of Dr. William I. Wilson, three daughters, all residents of Bellefonte, and one son, William Wilson Curtin, of Philadelphia.