

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-one.

To His Excellency, Honorable JOHN D. LONG, Governor of
the Commonwealth:

I have the honor to send you the following report of the proceedings relating to the proposed Centennial Celebration of the Surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, which I have attended as the representative of the Commonwealth, together with such information as may indicate what part it will be possible or desirable for the Commonwealth to take in such celebration.

REPORT.

In 1879, his Excellency Governor Holliday of Virginia originated formal action of the States, in the matter of celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of the Surrender of Cornwallis, by inviting the Governors of the thirteen original United States to meet at Philadelphia, on Oct. 18, 1879, for the purpose of making preliminary arrangements for the celebration. The Governors, if unable personally to attend, were desired to send representatives of their States. Governor Talbot, being unable to be present, requested me to attend as the representative of the Commonwealth.

2 YORKTOWN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION. [Feb.

The first meeting of the Governors was held in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, where the first Continental Congress sat, and was subsequently adjourned to Independence Hall. The Governors of Virginia, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and the representative of Massachusetts were present. They were formally received by the public authorities of Pennsylvania and of Philadelphia. Their meeting attracted much attention; all the attending Governors expressed much interest in the celebration, and their intention to lend it their active aid. The following resolutions were passed:—

“*Resolved*, That we, the Governors and representatives of the original thirteen colonies, convened at Independence Hall, in Philadelphia, this 18th day of October, 1879, knowing that the purposes for which we are assembled meet the hearty approbation of our constituents, do hereby commend to the people of the United States such a celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, as shall befit the historical significance of that event and the present greatness of the nation.

“*Resolved*, That a committee of one from each State, to be nominated by the governors thereof, of which committee Governor Holliday shall be chairman, be appointed to make proper arrangements for such celebration.”

On the following Thursday, Oct. 23, a preliminary celebration of the anniversary of the surrender was held upon the field at Yorktown, in which the Governor of Virginia and representatives of many of the original States, and prominent officers of the Army and Navy, participated. The North Atlantic squadron had been ordered to Yorktown and lay in York River. A procession formed at the landing, and, under the escort of the United States troops from Fortress Monroe, the marines of the fleet and numerous military organizations of the vicinity marched to the field, where an oration and poem were delivered. There was a large attendance of visitors from Richmond, Norfolk, Baltimore, and the immediate vicinity. The field of Yorktown is very extensive, and is so elevated as to command a wide and beautiful view of the river and vicinity. Its natural advantages are great.

In pursuance of the second resolution passed at Philadelphia, I was appointed by Governor Talbot a commissioner for Massachusetts, and that appointment was continued and confirmed by yourself.

At its last session Congress appointed a joint committee on the Yorktown Centennial Celebration, and appropriated one hundred thousand dollars for a monument to be erected on the field, and twenty thousand dollars for the expenses of the celebration.

I attended a meeting of the State Commissioners held in Washington, Dec. 10, 1880, to confer with the Congressional committee. As the result of this conference the Congressional committee adopted a general programme of ceremonies, to which each State is invited to contribute such part as it may see fit. I append a copy of this programme. It is also contemplated to invite representatives of France to attend as guests of the nation.

The Governor and people of Virginia have exhibited much interest in the celebration. It is particularly desired and expected that Massachusetts should take a worthy part in it, both on account of her prominence in the Revolution, and especially because it was upon a son of this State, General Benjamin Lincoln, that General Washington conferred the honor of receiving the sword of Cornwallis. It is hoped that Massachusetts will be represented by her Governor and some of her high civil authorities, and also by as large a military representation as it may be feasible to send.

The national appropriation of twenty thousand dollars will obviously only suffice for the strictly national expenditure, and will be insufficient for that, if France accepts the invitation to attend. Each State must therefore bear the expenses of its representatives; and the preliminary celebration in 1879 discloses the fact that neither Yorktown nor the vicinity can furnish shelter or entertainment for visitors. Hence those who attend must make complete provision for themselves in these regards, and the only method expedient, should the State determine to send any considerable representation, would be to proceed by steamship from Boston or some other accessible port. The ship could then lie in the river off Yorktown, and be the home of the visitors during

their stay. This method was to some extent adopted in 1879.

SOLOMON LINCOLN, JUN.

Comm'r for Mass. upon the Yorktown Centennial Celebration.

BOSTON, Dec. 30, 1880.

GENERAL PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES AT THE DEDICATION OF THE YORKTOWN MONUMENT.

Programme.

The guests of the National Government will assemble at Washington, Oct. 18, 1881, and be received there with proper ceremonies by the Congressional Committee. The Committee will proceed, with the invited guests and such Government officials as may join them, to Yorktown, to arrive there on the morning of the nineteenth. Preparation will be made during the morning for the landing of troops, and the Oration and Poem will be delivered at two o'clock, P.M., with such accompanying services as the Committee may determine. These services will consist of brief addresses of welcome by the Governor of Virginia and others, an original ode, the laying of the corner-stone, with an address by the President of the United States, who will be invited to preside on the occasion.

The exercises will be interspersed with music by the military bands present, and with salutes by the artillery.

On the twentieth there will be a grand parade of all the military organizations on the battle-field, and a review by the President of the United States. The military exercises will be concluded with a Dress Parade. A competent Army officer will be selected to take command of the parade.

It is hoped that a Naval review may be held on the twenty-first in the adjacent waters.

The Governors and Commissioners of all the States will be invited to be present, the former with their military staffs and such military organizations as may wish to accompany them; and it is particularly desired that at least the Original Thirteen States should provide for as imposing a representation as possible, by the presence of their civil officers and military organizations.

The Committee suggests, without presuming to give any directions in the matter, that each State provide itself with such means of transportation and accommodation while present at the celebration as will enable it to take part in any local services which may take place.

The details of the celebration will be arranged hereafter, and with the list of invited guests will be published for general information.

JOHN W. JOHNSTON,

*Chairman Joint Committee of Congress on the
Yorktown Centennial Celebration.*

JOHN S. TUCKER,

Clerk of the Committee.

