

## Mrs. Thomas Chase Visits House Where Lincoln Wrote Act.

By James J. Cullinane.

An old woman who once had been a slave left her home on a pilgrimage last week to pay humble tribute to "Father Abraham," who had set her people free.

She went not to the beautiful shrine overlooking the Potomac, but to a simple, rambling cottage in the United States Soldiers' home.

Her pilgrimage was inspired by the approach of the seventy-fourth anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863—a document drafted by Abraham Lincoln in the solitude of Anderson Cottage.

No celebrations have been scheduled in honor of the anniversary and the "President's Study" in Anderson cottage where the historic document was written is now a dormitory.

First Sergt. James Davidson, a stripling of 64, was surprised when he learned that Mrs. Thomas W. Chase, 92, had come to Anderson Cottage to see the room in which "Father Abraham" drafted the proclamation.

"Not many people come out here in the winter," said Sergt. Anderson.

Beds fill the cottage and only a small tablet hanging on the porch reminds the visitor that inside a great human document was written by the man who was later to say at Gettysburg:

"The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here."

But Mrs. Thomas W. Chase, 92, will never forget those hectic days in the late summer of 1862 when the gaunt, lonely man in Anderson Cottage worked on the document that was to make her forever free.

For it was in the spring of 1862 that Mrs. Chase—then Anna Harrison, frightened young slave girl fugitive from the cornfields of Carolina County, Va.—arrived in the Capital.

"I used to see Mr. Lincoln almost every day riding out to the Soldiers' Home that summer," said Mrs. Chase. "Of course, we did not know what he was doing, but he was such a great man. And I can remember how we laughed and cried when he set the slaves free."

Anna Harrison was a sturdy young woman of 18 who carried baskets of food on her head to the slaves in the cornfields, but the fire of ambition still burns as brightly in her eyes as when she led the bondsmen away from the Taylor plantation.

"Our old master and missus were dead, and we heard that our young master had been killed in the war," related Mrs. Chase. "So we hitched up the ox cart and I led my family away to the Free State."

The "Free State," Mrs. Chase explained, meant to the slaves all of the territory inside the lines of the Union Army. By ox cart her family went to Fredericksburg, Va., where they boarded a train for Washington.

"This city was just a mudhole then. I went into service and met Mr. Chase, who had been a slave near Annapolis. He could read a little—they never gave us any opportunity to get educated—and we were married."

"Mr. Chase drove a coal wagon until his boss found out he could read and then they fired him. But Mr. Chase kept on learning, and after the war he broadened his education. In 1873 Mr. Chase was in the House of Delegates of the District under Gov. Shepherd and he put through the normal school bill, which gave colored people an opportunity for higher education."

"Mr. Chase graduated from Howard University with a law degree later. Oh, I've watched my people and my children and grandchildren become lawyers, doctors, musicians and teachers."

"Now they tell me I should not talk so much about the days when I was a slave. But I can truly tell you of those days. I've seen my aunts and cousins sold on the block in shackles. I've seen my people lashed and shot. I know what slavery was. It was not our fault that we were held down. I'm proud to see my people rising."

And clearly defined in Mrs. Chase's mind when she gazed out of the latticed windows of Anderson Cottage were the words of Lincoln when he said:

"It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have, thus far, so nobly advanced."

And so, after leaving the "forgotten shrine," Mrs. Chase took her 8-year-old granddaughter, Annabelle Payne, on her lap in their home at 416 R street northwest and told her of life as it was in the cornfield and life as it was after "Father Abraham" signed the proclamation.

Wide-eyed, Annabelle promised her grandmother she would study hard.

President Lincoln drafted the Emancipation Proclamation early in the summer of 1862, but kept that fact a closely guarded secret. The President was subjected to intense pressure from antislavery groups to exercise his war powers under the Constitution and proclaim the freedom of the slaves in the seceded States.

Lincoln contended, however, that such a proclamation would be impotent if it followed a Union defeat. In response to an open letter from Horace Greeley demanding that he announce his policy, Lincoln wrote:

"As to the policy I 'seem to be pursuing,' as you say, I have not meant to leave anyone in doubt. I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution. If there be those who would not save the Union, unless at the same time they could save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless at the same time they could destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or



Mrs. Thomas W. Chase, 92, 416 T street northwest, gazes reflectively out of the window of the "President's Study" of Anderson Cottage, United States Soldiers' Home, where President Lincoln drafted the Emancipation Proclamation which freed her and her people from slavery. Her visit to the cottage was inspired by the approach of the anniversary of the signing of the proclamation on January 1, 1863.

to destroy slavery. What I do about slavery and the colored race I do because I believe it helps to save this Union, and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I have here stated my purpose according to my views of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft expressed personal wish that all men everywhere should be free."

At about that time Lincoln came into the White House from Anderson Cottage, where he had been redrafting the proclamation, and laid the document before his Cabinet. Secretary Seward suggested that its proclamation should be delayed until after a Union victory.

"The wisdom of the view of the Secretary of State struck me with very great force," President Lincoln afterward declared. " . . . the result was that I put the draft of the document aside, waiting for a victory. From time to time I added or changed a line. Well, the next news we had was of Pope's disaster at Bull Run. Things looked darker than ever. Finally came the week of the Battle of Antietam. I determined to wait no longer. The news came, I think, on Wednesday, that the advantage was on our side. I was then staying at the Soldiers' Home. Here I finished writing the second draft of the preliminary proclamation; came up on Saturday, called the Cabinet to hear it, and it was published the following Monday."

The preliminary proclamation, published on September 22, 1862, declared that on the first day of January all slaves in any State then in rebellion against the United States "shall be then, thence forward, and forever free."

Slaves who escaped into Union States or the District of Columbia, the proclamation declared, should be deemed free unless their owner could prove that he had not borne arms against the United States or in any way aided the rebels.

The closing words of the final proclamation were:

"And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

There were constitutional authorities who argued that since the proclamation extended freedom only to slaves in the rebel States it was illegal. But there was no doubt in the minds of Mrs. Chase and her people.

On October 12, 1864 the State of Maryland abolished slavery within her borders and the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery throughout the United States was proclaimed adopted December 18, 1865.