

The original documents are located in Box 72, folder “Williamsburg, VA - President's Speech, 1/31/76 (3)” of the John Marsh Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 29, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. GOLDWIN
FROM: ROBERT T. HARTMANN
SUBJECT: Presidential Speech Draft Attached

The President has asked me to obtain your comments on the draft attached and report them to him. Therefore, I respectfully request your priority attention and personal response on this draft (even if you simply approve it as is) **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

Please return your comments to the Editorial Office in Room 115, OEOB.

To expedite this process, it is not necessary to have your views on the literary style or grammatical purity of this draft. Please indicate legibly your suggestions for improving the factual accuracy and/or the substantive policy statements that are within your area of expertise and responsibility (either on the attached drafts or on a separate piece of paper if extensive revisions or substitutions are recommended).

We will either incorporate your suggestions or, in case of conflicting views, present the options to the President for his final decision.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please check one box and sign below:

() I approve the draft without changes.


(X) Suggested revisions are noted on the draft or attached separately. **pp. 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 17**

Initials: RTG

JAN 30 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 29, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. & MRS. JACK MARSH
FROM: RED CAVANEY 
SUBJECT: THE PRESIDENT & MRS. FORD'S
VISIT TO WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA
Saturday, January 31, 1976

You are manifested on Mrs. Ford's Jetstar and are requested to be in the Distinguished Visitors Lounge at Andrews AFB 1:30 pm. Departure from Andrews is scheduled for 1:50 pm with an arrival at Langley AFB, Langley, Virginia at 2:25 pm.



Attire for Williamsburg is Black Tie.

WEATHER REPORT: Partly cloudy with scattered showers and winds northwest 15-25 knots, temperature in high 40s-low 20s.

There will be no baggage pick-up in the West Basement - take your baggage to Andrews and hand carry on Jetstar.

A Detailed Guest & Staff Schedule will be available upon arriving in Williamsburg.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MR. MARSH:

This is all that is presently available on the Williamsburg trip. Detailed itineraries, etc., will be given out on the plane tomorrow.

Connie



January 30, 1976

MEMORANDUM TO: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JACK MARSH

In reference to your forthcoming visit to Williamsburg, you should be aware that the Commonwealth of Virginia Committee responsible for observing the Bicentennial of Virginia is called:

Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission

cc: DCheney
RNessen
RCavaney
TO'Donnell
MFriedersdorf

JOM:cb



REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT FOR THE VIRGINIA GENERAL
ASSEMBLY, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

I am honored to speak before this special joint session of the Virginia State Legislature in this historic Hall of the House of Burgesses in my first address of 1976 devoted to the National Bicentennial.

This Assembly is the most appropriate forum in America for a discussion of self-government in the 200th year of our nationhood.

You sustain a continuation of our oldest representative legislative body -- a living shrine of the American heritage.

There would be no Bicentennial today without the concept of self-government which began here in Virginia in 1619. It was in Williamsburg where the representatives of the people of Virginia, held accountable by their electors, attended the House of Burgesses and learned the elements of self-government. It was here that republican principles evolved to challenge the oppression of a distant and unresponsive regime which sought to impose taxation without representation, and government without the consent of the governed.



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The concept of self-determination flowed from stirrings of religious and political liberty in the mother country, from Magna

Carta and Cromwell's Commonwealth. ~~Along with those who signed~~

~~the social contract of the Mayflower,~~

the Virginians created a new way of life strikingly different from the lives of the common people of Europe of that day.

When three small ships landed at nearby Jamestown, they brought the seeds of an idea that would make men strive for local control over the fate of local people.

America's most moving chronicle is how courageous Virginians defied the centralized authority represented by the royal governors and tax collectors appointed by a king on another continent. This distinguished assembly may agree that telling Virginians about their own glorious history would be like lecturing God on how the earth was created. I will not so presume and will confine myself to those aspects of paramount relevance to the chain of inspiration, initiative, and action

originating in Virginia and culminating today in the great Bicentennial
our nation is privileged to celebrate.

The process that began with the initial meeting of Burgesses led
to Patrick Henry's defiant outcry for liberty or death, to George Mason's
Virginia Declaration of Rights, to Thomas Jefferson's role in formulating
our Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and to the service of
yet another member of Burgesses, George Washington, as commander-
in-chief and the first President of the United States of America.

As 38th President, I commend you for your initiative and
patriotism in preserving and restoring these wonderful buildings of
Colonial Williamsburg. Virginia has kept a sacred national trust with
diligence and pride.

(more)

Nevertheless, you and I, and all Americans in this Bicentennial year, must do more than maintain the treasured structures of our national legacy. We must revive the cherished values of the American Revolution with a resurgence of the spirit that rang forth in these streets of Williamsburg in colonial times. I invoke the instructive motto of Colonial Williamsburg: "that the future may learn from the past."

This year we venerate the contributions of the Founding Fathers with timely and appropriate words of tribute. Yet, if we are to be faithful to the trust they bequeathed, we must redeem and perpetuate their legacy in a continuing quest for the principles of responsible self-government which they advocated.

Patrick Henry, calling for national unity in Philadelphia, said "I am not a Virginian, but an American." I believe that Patrick Henry would take a look at today's America and proclaim: "I am not only an American but also a Virginian who believes in the sanctity of local control over the fate of local people."

Two hundred years have demonstrated that there are certain vital functions, especially foreign policy and national security, which the Federal Government must perform.

George Washington and others warned -- in this very place -- against the danger of the centralized power of government. Yet we find ourselves in a Bicentennial year when we look back, with something less than pleasure, and measure the erosion of State and local authority.

Indeed, America has now reached the point where the Federal establishment employs over three million people. This is more than the combined populations of all 13 original states when the Virginia convention reserved to your people and your state government "all power not specifically bestowed upon the national government."

The Founding Fathers understood that republican self-government could not exist if people did not possess the traditional

virtues of self-discipline, self-reliance, and a disinterested concern for the public good. "Republican government," said James Madison, "presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form."

In the early years, the American political system worked so well that we accepted it as a tradition. We did not question why it worked and only assumed that its magical providence would continue forever.

In the 18th century, Jefferson and Adams agreed that self-government, as they understood it, presupposed a lifestyle dependent upon qualities they called "republican virtues" -- attributes that would make self-government possible.

Our state Constitutions emerged. They took great care not to tamper with the tradition of self-government that flowed from the earliest precedents. The States demonstrated that the real strength

of American political tradition is that truly free people do not make a contract with a centralized government but only among themselves.

The Founding Fathers favored what they called "mild government." Their premise was that you can only achieve "mild government" if you maintain local governments so responsive that the responsibilities of national government are limited in scope. And their premise was one of confidence in the ability of individuals to govern themselves.

To better understand what we are celebrating, let us look back at the conciliation of democratic and republican principles incorporated into American popular government 200 years ago. Democratic principles tended to the liberal, and to the masses, the republican to the conservative and the individual. The lines were drawn between the emotions of the people and their rational consensus. But, with compromise and cooperation, the nation prospered and grew.

In recent years, with a complex and rapidly changing society, more and more people looked to Washington to solve local problems.

The view of too many was that the world's richest and most powerful nation can do anything -- and do it instantly. Far too much was promised and a new realism is now emerging all across America.

Could we expect a huge government to give people everything but to take nothing away? To support a massive new revolution, not merely of rising expectations but also of rising entitlements? I refer to the escalation of material things people feel automatically entitled to, without regard to their own productivity or to their contribution to the economy.

Freedom is now misinterpreted to mean the instantaneous redress of all social and economic inequalities, at the public expense, through the instrumentality of the federal government. In pursuit of that idyllic quest, the federal bureaucracy was expanded, power flowed from the towns, the cities and states to a highly centralized national entity, always bigger and more powerful -- though not always more efficient.

If this course is pursued, it will mean much less incentive to create capital and much more inflation. Two hundred years ago, men of vision understood that poverty is abolished by economic growth, not by economic redistribution. They knew that only a self-disciplined people can create a society in which ordered liberty will promote both economic prosperity and political participation at every level.

The founding of America was more than a political event. It was an act of political faith -- a promise to Americans and to the entire world. Inherent in the Declaration of Independence was the message: People can govern themselves. They can live in freedom with equal rights. They can also act in accord with reason, and restraint, and respect for the rights of others and the total community.

Today we celebrate this Bicentennial when too many continue to glorify instant gratification over everything else, change merely for the sake of change, and impetuous desire over thoughtful reflection.

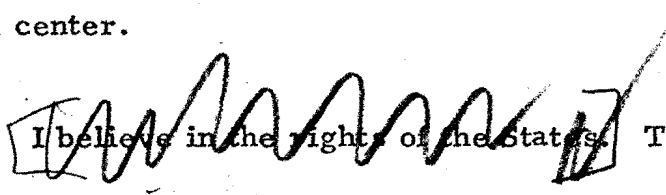
Our Nation's founders held that civic virtue, ~~or what~~
~~they called "republican morality"~~, was a willingness to suspend the
pursuit of immediate personal interest and personal gains for the
common good.

American's self-government remains the most stirring --
and successful -- political experiment in history. Its survival and
ultimate success requires a new concentration on the meaning of self-
government, on duties and responsibilities as well as demands and
desires.

We must regain the same willingness to work as those who
built a colonial capital on this site, the same open mind as those who
envisioned our freedom, the same sense of responsibility as those who
preserved it. We must enshrine our rights, but perform our duties.

America must now evaluate what is possible with the common
sense balance of what is practical.

As a young Congressman, I listened in the 1950's to the warnings of President Eisenhower. He said that unless we preserved the traditional power and basic responsibilities of state government, we would not preserve the king of America previously known. We would have, instead, quite another kind of America. The pendulum has since swung very far in the direction that President Eisenhower feared. But I am today confident that the will of the people, voiced all across America, is beginning to bring the pendulum of power back to a balanced center.

 I believe in the rights of the States. The preservation of the 50 States as vigorous units of government is vital to individual freedom and to the growth of real national strength and character. Yet it is useless to advocate states' rights without simultaneously honoring the responsibilities of the states.

An objective reallocation of state responsibilities can reduce central authority while reinforcing state and local governments. The states can regain and reassert their traditional rights and responsibilities if we remove federal barriers to responsive government, restore responsible taxing and fiscal systems, and encourage local initiative. But if the states fail to act, Federal power will plunge even more deeply into a new vacuum created by political expediencies and pressures.

We must, above all, see that Government remains responsive to the real and legitimate needs of the American people. And we must make sure that, in meeting those needs, each level of government performs its proper function -- no more and no less.

This is essential to preserve our system and to draw new energy from the source of all governmental power -- the people.

5 When the King's agents dissolved the House of Burgesses prior to the American Revolution, its members disagreed on some particulars. But they shared a common faith that led to a common glory. It did not matter whether they met in Raleigh's Tavern or in the designated chamber. They trusted one another and worked together in the common interest. They shared their confidence with like-minded people in every other colony.

This trust is manifest in our flag with its alternate stripes and stars which share the same galaxy. It is inherent in every presumption on which our free system is based. Much has changed in American life. Yet the Bicentennial can remind ourselves of those values we wish to preserve, and the mutual cooperation and confidence we must restore.

The Bicentennial emphasizes three themes: heritage, festivity and horizons. Its spirit is exemplified by Colonial Williamsburg whose creativity has inspired communities throughout America. But our success in observing this great occasion shall not be gauged by the events we commemorate in a proud past. Nor, shall it be measured by expositions, fairs and fireworks or plans and programs for future projects.

A real observance of our Bicentennial requires a combination of these and more. It is the capture of a new spirit from the old. It is the redemption, in a new reality, of the essence of the Virginia Declaration of Rights -- of the Declaration of Independence -- and of the Federal Constitution.

These documents are something more than compacts of government. They were, and still are, expressions of the will and the spirit of a people.

If the Bicentennial is to be more than a colorful historical pageant, we must restore on a local and state level the opportunity for individuals to have more say in how their taxes are spent, in how they live, how they work, how they fight crime, how they go to school and even how and where they recite their prayers.

Should the Bicentennial accomplish nothing else, this alone would be a resounding triumph -- a fitting tribute to our forebears.

Two hundred years ago, a distant government overtaxed individuals, created unemployment by stifling free enterprise, wrecked the Colonial economy, and denied local people any real say in local affairs. The Bicentennial is an instructive lesson in history.

1976 is the year for an Appeal to Greatness. The American Spirit has brought us to this point in human achievement. It is a

~~greatness based upon reason, responsibility and leadership, a greatness~~

~~based on individual opportunity and enlightenment, a greatness reflected~~

~~in the quality of our lives and our pride in ourselves and in our nation.~~

Let us remain a nation respected for the things in which its people believe, rather than envied for the things they have.

Americans, after 200 years, remain pioneers -- pioneers in a complex modern world of confusion and rapid change.

I am confident that our republic will continue to soar.

We will not clip the wings of the American eagle nor shrink from the heavens of opportunity open to us.

I believe in America. I reaffirm my faith in the unique value of a government of shared responsibility. I believe in our capacity to foster diversity within unity, to encourage innovation and creativity both privately and publicly, and to achieve a proper balance between the national and state governments.

This Bicentennial will foster new pride among our children as we renew a republic whose democratic values are manifest in responsive and ethical government.

The vision of this House of Burgesses, first expressed
355 years ago in Colonial Virginia still lives. It is the simple truth
that a government closest to the people is the best government.

#

This contains the program
text for the printed
souvenir folder to be
given Assembly participants

PROGRAM

Tab A

of

The General Assembly

of

Virginia

Sixteenth

Commemorative Session in the Capitol Building

in Williamsburg

January 31, 1976



SIXTEENTH COMMEMORATIVE SESSION
of
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA
Williamsburg, January 31, 1976

In this Bicentennial Year, Colonial Williamsburg is uniquely privileged to welcome the President of the United States and the General Assembly of Virginia to the site where 200 years ago delegates of the Virginia Convention, meeting in the shadow of a desperate and dangerous war with England, dared to cast a unanimous vote for freedom, whatever the cost.

This series of commemorative sessions began forty-two years ago when the reconstructed Capitol was opened to the public in February, 1934. In the years since, except for two sessions during and just after World War II, the General Assembly has returned periodically to the House of Burgesses, the historic setting for deliberations dating back more than 270 years in Williamsburg, to the founding and development of the American principles of independence, self-government, and freedom of the individual.

The men who laid the foundations of state government and indeed the foundations of today's America met in the colonial Capital for eighty-one years from 1699 to 1780. Early records are not entirely clear about where America's oldest legislative body first convened here, but it is known that the Assembly did sit at the College of William and Mary on December 5, 1700. The Capitol was first used in 1703-04, but burned on January 30, 1747. The second Capitol, completed in

1753, incorporated the surviving walls of its predecessor, and, after the removal of Virginia's government to Richmond in 1780, it too was destroyed by fire in 1832.

The familiar story of Virginia's leadership in the revolutionary movement was played in Williamsburg's Capitol -- the bold instructions to Virginia's delegation in the Continental Congress to move for independence; the passage of George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights; the writing of the first Virginia constitution; and the election of Patrick Henry as the first governor of the Commonwealth.

The rich tradition of the Virginia past is increasingly shared with all Americans and members of the world community. Colonial Williamsburg itself continues in its role as an unparalleled historical and educational institution, and no small part of that role is the interpretation of the history of the General Assembly of Virginia, in the eras of both colony and Commonwealth.

Colonial Williamsburg cherishes this occasion as an affirmation of a friendship and kinship of long standing. The association between the colonial Capitol and today's General Assembly serves as an eloquent reminder of the contributions and sacrifices of early Virginians to the welfare of all Americans.

RESOLUTION and REVOLUTION

Williamsburg: 1776

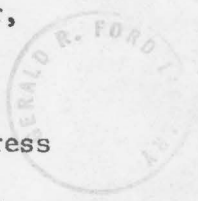
This sixteenth commemorative session recalls both the turbulent days of 1776 when the most stirring events associated with the colonial Capitol occurred ^{The occasion also honors the} ~~as well as the~~ achievements of such great architects of representative government and individual liberty as Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, George Washington, James Madison, George Mason, Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, and many more brilliant luminaries in the Virginia galaxy of greatness.

The principles these men enunciated in the Williamsburg Capitol are as fundamental as they are imperishable. Although times change, the basic tenets set forth in the series of great documents remain unaltered.

Two hundred years ago in 1776, a period of great significance for all Americans began in Williamsburg and concluded in Philadelphia on July 4.

January was a month of sweeping rebellious ferment. At four o'clock in the morning of New Year's day, 1776, guns from British ships anchored in Norfolk harbour bombarded the town, and landing parties set fire to waterfront warehouses. By the end of the day, Virginia's largest seaport had gone up in flames. Scarcely eight months had passed since the blood of minutemen first flowed on Lexington Green, and Boston was still under British siege. Yet during this bleak winter, Independence was in the air.

By spring, North Carolina delegates to the Continental Congress had received instructions from home to support independence. Other



colonies stood more or less ready to second the motion -- if someone would take the lead.

Virginia took the lead. In the Capitol building here in Williamsburg came the first in a chain of actions that led directly to the Declaration of Independence on July 4.

The remarkable events here during 1776 resulted from a slow evolution: loyal British subjects becoming American patriots.

Crucial to this resolution of loyalties was the vital "Decade of Decision" just before the Revolution, starting in 1765 when the House of Burgesses, meeting at the Capitol in Williamsburg, adopted Patrick Henry's defiant resolves against the British imposed Stamp Act. As Thomas Jefferson was to observe, "Mr. Henry certainly gave the first impulse to the ball of revolution."

Three years later the Burgesses again declared that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies, not even through such unorthodox methods as the hated Townshend Acts. The royal governor reacted by dissolving the assembly, and the burgesses marched to the Raleigh Tavern on Duke of Gloucester Street to meet as private individuals. There George Washington presented George Mason's proposed boycott of all English goods, and 94 of the 116 delegates concurred. The boycott in Virginia and elsewhere proved effective, and the following year Parliament repealed all the new duties except on tea, keeping that as a symbol of its right to tax the colonies.

In 1773 Virginia patriots formed the first intercolonial Committee of Correspondence, which became the primary means of communication among the thirteen colonies serving to unite their efforts

in a common cause. A year later, in response to news of the closing of the port of Boston, the burgesses showed their support by declaring June 1, 1774, "a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer." The governor again dissolved the assembly and once more the burgesses gathered at the Raleigh, signing another pledge to boycott British goods, further proclaiming that, ". . . an Attack made on one of our Sister Colonies, to compel Submission to arbitrary Taxes, is an Attack made on all British America."

The rump session also issued a call for what became later that year the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia, where Peyton Randolph of Williamsburg was elected its president.

In 1775 the torch moved even closer to the powder keg of open rebellion. The burgesses, fearing intervention by the royal governor, Lord Dunmore, if they met in Williamsburg, held a March session in Richmond made memorable by Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" oration.

Less than a month later, during the night of April 21 -- 22, Lord Dunmore, alarmed over the possibility of an armed uprising, seized gunpowder from Virginia's reserve in the Magazine on Williamsburg's Market Square. Only a promise to repay the colony for its loss prevented bloodshed as Patrick Henry led a force of armed volunteers to within fifteen miles of Williamsburg.

The governor's subsequent branding of Henry as an outlaw only served to increase the fiery patriot's popularity.

Shortly after the second Continental Congress convened its May session in Philadelphia, where Randolph was again elected president,

Lord Dunmore made a final effort to reach compromise with the burgesses. He called them into session on June 1 in Williamsburg and tendered the British proposal that England would not tax the colonists if they would agree to tax themselves in accordance with quotas sent from London.

Perhaps sensing that his offer was "too little, too late," only a week thereafter under the cloak of night, Lord Dunmore and his family fled Williamsburg. His abrupt departure marked the end of British rule in Virginia.

Virginians continued their preparations for the decision of 1776. On June 15, 1775, George Washington became commander in chief of the Continental Army, and in September, the Continental Congress reconvened in Philadelphia.

Lord Dunmore opened military operations in the Hampton Roads communities, and Virginia militiamen had their first taste of combat before the year's end. As 1775 closed the Virginia lawmakers returned to Williamsburg to establish a navy and to continue the Committee of Safety, which served as an interim government for the colony between sessions of the assembly.

If the events of 1775 seemed fast moving to Virginians, those of 1776 would accelerate at an even greater pace. Within the span of fifty days, the leaders of Virginia -- sitting as members of the Convention of Delegates in Williamsburg or, in some cases, representing the colony at the Continental Congress -- played key roles in establishing a new nation and transforming the colony into a democratic state.

When 1776 began -- with the New Year's Day gutting of Norfolk -- the average Virginian was committed to an uncertain but obviously stormy future.

Lord Dunmore, formerly His Majesty's symbol of law in Virginia, was to spend part of the year playing the marauder, his vessels raiding Chesapeake Bay plantations and penetrating far up the Tidewater's rivers.

In the fateful year 1776, Virginia had about 500,000 inhabitants, roughly two-fifths slaves. Her economy rested squarely on the soil. Disruption of trade -- especially of Virginia's "bewitching vegetable," tobacco -- was bound to have serious consequences for everyone.

Meanwhile, at Bunker Hill in Boston, and at Quebec, where the Americans tried to carry out an offensive, the British were learning that the rebellion was not going to be easy to put down. So far it was only that. The great decision to declare for independence if necessary had not been made.

Roots of conflict often ran deep, splitting father from son, friend from friend. Virginia's aristocratic John Randolph examined all the arguments and, heeding the voice of reason, as he put it, decided for the king and moved to England. But his son Edmund stayed and served as aide-de-camp to Washington.

Thus the stage was set for the May 6, 1776, gathering of delegates to the Virginia Convention, one of the most remarkable legislative sessions in this country's history.

The mood was determined and defiant, the air charged with excitement. Tempers held in check during the decade of controversy with the crown and Parliament were close to explosion.

Much had happened in the hearts and minds of the colonists since Lord Dunmore had seized the powder, for a year earlier no Virginian in his right mind had seriously considered breaking with the mother country.

The Convention was under the stern leadership of a conservative among revolutionaries, Edmund Pendleton, one who had resisted Patrick Henry's early acts of defiance.

During the days and nights of work in Williamsburg as historic resolutions were drafted, debated, and passed, and the framework of Virginia was built, Pendleton wrote to Thomas Jefferson in Philadelphia, "We build a Government slowly, I hope it will be founded on a rock."

On May 15, after a humble appeal to God, that "Searcher of Hearts," the delegates unanimously instructed the Virginians at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia not only to support but to propose independence.

The new Continental flag -- the Grand Union -- rose over the Capitol cupola, replacing the British Union flag. Spontaneous enthusiasm rocked the city. Capitol Square, crowded with horses, men, and vehicles, was the scene of tumultuous celebration.

Some of the gentry provided a purse "for the purpose of treating the soldiery," and musket and artillery fire followed each of the historic toasts -- The American Independent States . . . The Grand Congress of the United States and their respective legislatures . . . General Washington, and victory to the American arms.

"Illuminations, and other demonstrations of joy," concluded

the evening, according to Purdie's Virginia Gazette, which also marked the event by removing the British seal of the Virginia colony from its masthead to make way for a type box bearing the words "Thirteen United Colonies -- United, we stand . . . Divided, we fall."

And, in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia on June 7, a tall, lean, red-haired Virginian rose to offer the vital motion. Richard Henry Lee, at 44 the senior member of the delegation and an orator to rival Patrick Henry, read these words:

Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.

Congress approved Lee's motion on July 2, and two days later addressed to the world a formal Declaration of American Independence.

That eloquent statement of belief in man's liberty and equality grew directly from the decision taken on May 15 in Williamsburg. It had even been penned by a young man well known in Williamsburg -- Thomas Jefferson.

Back in Williamsburg, meanwhile, events had moved even faster than in Philadelphia. Two related decisions, also taken by the Virginia Convention, bore fruit before the end of June, both largely the work of George Mason, the forgotten man of American liberties.

His Declaration of Rights, adopted unanimously on June 12, contained ringing statements of individual liberty and the right of self-government, and is today regarded not only as one of the great state papers of history, but also as one of the noblest expressions of mankind's aspirations toward a full society.

Of all the documents associated with Williamsburg, the Declaration of Rights is by far the most important. Harvard's distinguished historian, Samuel Eliot Morison, has called it, "one of the great liberty documents of all time."

When the delegates to the Convention adopted the Declaration of Rights, they also named a Committee to prepare "such a plan of government as will be most likely to maintain peace and order in this colony, and secure substantial and equal liberty to the people." The constitution, largely from the pen of George Mason, was adopted on June 29, 1776.

The constitution's provisions, unlike the Declaration of Rights, were dictated almost solely by the exigencies and apprehensions of the moment. It was the work of a people in revolt against tyranny and hence wary of executive power in any form.

The governor, for example, would be elected annually by joint ballot of House and Senate, and have no veto power. In the course of debate, Patrick Henry argued that the chief executive "would be a mere phantom, unable to defend the office from the usurpation of the legislature."

The truth of his own words would be ruefully recalled by Henry many times. For on July 6, 1776, at 40, he was inaugurated in Williamsburg as the first governor of the commonwealth of Virginia.

The Convention of 1776 adjourned. Delegates who had entered the capital as British subjects took their leave of Williamsburg as citizens of a new commonwealth.

It is not clear when the news of the extraordinary events at Philadelphia reached Williamsburg but certainly not much earlier than July 19. On that day, Purdie's Gazette appeared with news of the July 4 vote and of the proclamation of the Declaration at the State House in Philadelphia on the eighth.

On the twentieth, however, official receipt of the text was acknowledged and orders issued that the people be fully informed both by publication in the press and by having the sheriff of every county read it at the door of his courthouse on the next court day.

Williamsburg's celebration occurred on July 25. In the afternoon, a solemn proclamation of the Declaration took place at the Capitol, the Courthouse, and the Palace, "amidst the acclamation of the people, accompanied by the firing of cannon and musketry." A parade of the Continental troops stationed in town followed, and in the evening the buildings sparkled with lighted candles.

The hot summer wore on. In the fall, a frustrated Patrick Henry, "cribbed, cabined, and confined," observed from his governor's office in the Palace the convening of the first General Assembly under the new state constitution. It gathered October 7 in the Hall of the House of Burgesses -- now called the House of Delegates -- where Henry had presented his resolutions against the Stamp Act eleven years earlier, capturing the imagination of a continent.

Thus, in the summer of 1776, one Virginian had given to America and the world a Declaration of Rights and constitution for the new commonwealth. Another had written the Declaration of Independence for

the new American nation. Still another led the armies to make these rights respected and independence an actuality.

And with dramatic appropriateness, the freedom of the American states was to become assured in Virginia -- at Yorktown in 1781.

The road from Jamestown's fort, to Williamsburg's Capitol, to Yorktown's decisive redoubts, in miles is only a short distance. But measured on other scales: accomplishment, endurance, and resolution, it stretches out 174 years.

Later, in an America whose independence had been won, George Mason was to look back on the achievements of those momentous days of 1776 in Williamsburg and remark: "We seem to have been treading on enchanted ground."

This Commemorative Session of the Virginia General Assembly is part of Colonial Williamsburg's Bicentennial Commemorative Series.

-11-

PATRICK HENRY, one of the most eloquent and incendiary of revolutionary orators.

BRITISH MARINES engaged in the surreptitious removal of the colony's gunpowder supply.

THE CONTINENTAL FLAG replacing the British Union flag atop the Capitol in Williamsburg.

GEORGE MASON, author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and of the new state's constitution.

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Williamsburg, Virginia)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
BEFORE THE
VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE OLD CAPITOL

4:05 P.M. EST

Mr. Speaker, Governor Godwin, Mr. Justice Powell, members of the Virginia Congressional delegation, delegates to the General Assembly, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I am highly honored to speak before this special joint session of the Virginia General Assembly -- my first address of 1976 devoted to the National Bicentennial. Your Assembly is the most appropriate forum in America for a discussion of self-government in the 200th year of our nationhood. Today, in this Hall of the House of Burgesses, you continue our oldest representative legislative body, a living shrine of the American heritage.

There would be no Bicentennial without the concept of self-government which began in Virginia in 1619. We meet today where the representatives of the people of Virginia perfected America's legislative process. It was here that brave civilians challenged the oppression of a distant and responsive regime that sought to impose taxation without representation and government without the concept of the governed.

The Virginians created a new way of life strikingly different from the lives of the common people of Europe of that day. When the first settlers landed at nearby Jamestown, they brought the seeds of an idea that would make men strive for local control over the fate of local people.

America's most moving chronicle is how Virginians defied the centralized authority represented by royal governors and tax collectors appointed by a king on another continent. The momentous events that began in Virginia culminated in this great Bicentennial.

The process that started in 1619 led to Patrick Henry's defiant outcry for liberty or death, to George Mason's Virginia declaration of rights, to Thomas Jefferson's role in formulating our Declaration of Independence, and the services of yet another member of Burgesses, George Washington, as Commander-in-Chief and the first President of the United States of America.

MORE

(OVER)

As 38th President, I commend those whose initiative and patriotism has preserved and restored Colonial Williamsburg. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation serves the world by vividly reconstructing America's heritage.

Yet, in this Bicentennial year, we must do much more than maintain the treasured structures of our national legacy. We must revive the cherished values of the American Revolution with a resurgence of the spirit that rang forth in the streets of Williamsburg in Colonial times. I commend the instructive creed of the Colonial Williamsburg foundation: "That the future may learn from the past." We venerate the contributions of the founding fathers with timely and appropriate words of tribute. To keep faith, we must strive for the responsible self-government that they sought.

Patrick Henry, advocating national unity in Philadelphia, said: "I am not a Virginian, but an American." I believe that Patrick Henry would take one look at today's America and proclaim: "I am not only an American, but also a Virginian who believes in local control over the fate of local people."

George Washington warned against the danger of the centralized power of Government. Yet we find ourselves in the Bicentennial year when we look back with something less than pleasure at the erosion of State and local authority. Indeed, America has now reached the point where the Federal establishment employs over 3 million people. This is more than the combined population of all the 13 original States when the Virginia Convention reserved to your people and to your State Government all power not bestowed upon the national Government.

The founding fathers understood that a self-governing republic could not exist if people did not possess the traditional virtues of self-discipline, self-reliance and a patriotic concern for the public good. "Republican Government," said James Madison, "pre-supposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form."

In earlier years, the American political system worked so well that we accepted it as a tradition. We did not question why it worked. We assumed only that its magical providence would continue forever. In the 18th century, Jefferson and Adams agreed that self-government, as they understood it, involved a lifestyle dependent on qualities they called "Republican virtues" -- attributes that would make democracy possible.

When our State Constitutions were adopted, great care was taken to preserve fundamental principles of self-government. The States demonstrated that the real strength of American self-rule is that truly free people do not make a contract with a centralized Government but only among themselves.

MORE

The founding fathers favored what they called "mild Government." Their premise was that you can only achieve "mild Government" if you maintain local Government so responsive that the National Government is limited in scope. They believed in the ability of individuals to govern themselves. In recent years during an era of rapid change, more and more people looked to Washington to solve local problems. The view of too many was that the world's richest and most powerful Nation could do anything and do it instantly. Too much was expected and too much was promised.

Can you really expect a huge Government to give you everything but to take away nothing? Can we afford massive taxes to finance not only rising expectations, but also rising entitlements? I refer to the escalation of material things some citizens feel automatically entitled to, without regard to their own efforts or to their personal contribution to the economy.

Freedom is now misinterpreted by too many to mean the instantaneous reform of all social and economic inequality at the public expense through the instrumentality of the Federal Government.

In pursuit of that quest, the Federal bureaucracy was expanded. Power was drained away from the towns, from the cities, from the States to an increasingly centralized National Government -- always bigger, always more powerful--- though not always more efficient.

If this course is pursued, it will mean much less incentive to create capital and jobs and much more inflation. Two hundred years ago, men of vision understood that poverty is abolished by economic growth, not by economic redistribution. They knew that only a self-disciplined person can create a society in which ordered liberty will promote both economic prosperity and political participation at every level.

The founding of America was more than a political event. It was an act of political faith, a promise to Americans and to the entire world. Inherent in the Declaration of Independence was the message people can govern themselves, they can live in freedom with equal rights, they can also act in accord with reason and restraint and for the respect of the rights of others and the total community.

As we celebrate this Bicentennial, some citizens continue to glorify instant gratification over everything else. Some seek change merely for the sake of change and some heed emotional desire rather than common sense.

Our Nation's founders believed that civic virtue was a willingness to suspend the pursuit of immediate personal interest and personal gain for the common good.

MORE

An excellent theme for this Bicentennial would be the revival of civic virtue.

American self-government is the most stirring and successful political experiment in history, but its ultimate success requires new concentration on duties and responsibilities as well as demands and desires.

We must regain the same willingness to work as those who built a colonial capital on this site, the same open mind as those who envisioned our freedom, the same sense of responsibility as those who preserved it. We must enshrine our rights but carry out our duties.

Let us evaluate what is possible with the common sense balance of what is practical.

As a young Congressman, I listened in the 1950's to the warnings of President Eisenhower. He said unless we preserve the traditional power and basic responsibilities of State Government, we would not retain the kind of America previously known. We would have, instead, quite another kind of America.

The pendulum has swung since very far in the direction that President Eisenhower feared, but I am today confident that the will of the people, voiced here and all across America, is beginning to bring the pendulum of power back to the balanced center.

The preservation of the 50 States as vigorous units of Government is vital to individual freedom and the growth of real national strength and character. Yet, it is useless to advocate States' rights without simultaneously honoring the responsibilities of the States. An objective reassessment of State responsibilities can reduce central authority while strengthening State and local Governments. The States can regain and reassert traditional rights and responsibilities if we remove the Federal barriers to responsive Government, restore responsible taxing and fiscal systems and encourage local initiative. But if the States fail to act, Federal power will move even more deeply into a new vacuum created by political expediencies and pressures.

We must, above all, see that Government remains responsive to the real and legitimate needs of the American people. And we must make sure that in meeting those needs, each level of Government performs its proper function -- no more and no less. This is essential to preserve our system and to draw new energy from the source of all governmental power -- the people.

MORE

Before the King's agents dissolved the House of Burgesses prior to the American Revolution, members of the Burgesses often disagreed, but they shared a common faith that led to a common glory. It did not matter whether they met in Raleigh's Tavern or in the designated chamber. They trusted one another and worked together in the common interest. They shared their confidence with like-minded people in every other Colony.

This trust is manifest in our flag with its alternate stripes and stars, which share the same galaxy. It is inherent in every presumption on which our free system is based. Much has changed in American life. Yet, the Bicentennial can remind us of those values we must preserve and the mutual cooperation and confidence that we must restore.

Any real Bicentennial observance demands the capture of the new spirit from the old. It is the redemption, in a new reality, of the essence of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, of the Declaration of Independence and of the United States Constitution. These documents are something more than compacts of Government. They were, and still are, expressions of the will and the spirit of the people.

If the Bicentennial is to be more than a colorful, historical pageant, we must restore, on local and State level, the opportunity for individuals to have more say in how their taxes are spent, in how they live and how they work, and how they fight crime and how they go to school.

Should the Bicentennial accomplish nothing else, this alone would be a resounding triumph -- a fitting tribute to our heritage.

I believe in America as all of you do. I reaffirm my faith in the unique value of a government of shared responsibility. I believe in our capacity to foster diversity with unity, to encourage innovation and creativity, both privately as well as publicly, and to achieve a proper balance between the National and our State Governments. The vision of this House of Burgesses, first expressed 357 years ago in Colonial Virginia, remains vivid. It is a vision of a State and of a Nation where the government serves and the people rule. It is the vision of the supremacy of God and the dedication of man. As George Mason, author of the immortal Declaration of Rights, said of this historic place where we meet today: "We seem to have been treading on enchanted ground."

Thank you for allowing me to share this enchanted ground with you in this enchanted year.

Thank you very much.

END

(AT 4:25 P.M. EST)

Crossed/Byrd

February 23, 1976

Dear Harry:

Many thanks for sending me a copy of the Record concerning the commemorative session of the General Assembly in Williamsburg.

As you know, the President is deeply grateful for the gracious hospitality and friendly reception he received in Williamsburg.

With warmest personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

John O. Marsh, Jr.
Counsellor to the President

The Honorable Harry F. Byrd, Jr.
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.
JOM:RAR:cb





Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 94th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1976

No. 20

COMMEMORATIVE SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Mr. HARRY F. BYRD, JR., Mr. President, on Saturday, January 31, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia met in commemorative session at historic Williamsburg, Va., in the restored colonial capitol.

This session in the House of Burgesses chamber commemorated our Nation's Bicentennial and the first meeting following statehood of Virginia's General Assembly 200 years ago. This Bicentennial Year also marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg.

As a former member of the Virginia Legislature, I was pleased to be present on this occasion and share in the pride of that body as it was addressed for the first time in history by an incumbent President of the United States.

President Gerald Ford's speech on that day was preceded by remarks from Virginia's distinguished member of the U.S. Supreme Court, Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., and the Commonwealth's distinguished Governor, Mills E. Godwin, Jr.

The words eloquently spoken in Williamsburg have an abundance of meaning for all Americans as we celebrate our Bicentennial. I am pleased to commend to my colleagues the speeches of President Ford, Mr. Justice Powell, and Governor Godwin.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the remarks of President Ford, Justice Powell, and Governor Godwin and the toasts exchanged between the President and the Governor at a dinner in Williamsburg that evening.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE LEWIS F. POWELL, JR.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Governor Godwin, Virginia Members of Congress, Mr. Chief Justice, and Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Members of the General Assembly, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: We gather today in this American shrine to commemorate historic events, and also to honor patriots who brought them to fruition.

The importance of these events, that occurred two centuries ago, is attested by the presence of the President of the United States, the Governor of Virginia, the General Assembly of this Commonwealth, the Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia, and many other distinguished persons.

We join together to think gratefully of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, George Wythe, George Mason, and the other early Americans who led the march to freedom, and the formation of a new country.

We have in mind some of the greatest documents of all history—documents, inspired from this site, that have withstood the test of two centuries.

We honor the early Virginia legislators who met here to forge freedom, and we honor

particularly the General Assembly of Virginia that has carried forward the traditions established here of responsible and patriotic legislation.

The occasion that brings us together, the Bicentennial Year, is the anniversary of events in which Virginia—here in Williamsburg—played such a dramatic role.

Our commemoration today also highlights the Bicentennial activities planned for 1976 by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

We expect hundreds of thousands of visitors during this symbolic year. In carefully planned presentations, we will emphasize the historic significance of the events we celebrate.

The attention of our visitors will be directed particularly to four dates of unique importance:

On May 15, 1776 the Virginia Convention adopted the Virginia Resolution for Independence. This action, free of equivocation, boldly directed Virginia's representatives at Philadelphia to propose independence.

On June 12, 1776, the Virginia Declaration of Rights—drafted by George Mason—was adopted. This was the precursor, and to a large extent the model, of the Bill of Rights later incorporated into the Constitution.

June 29, 1776 marked the adoption of the Virginia Constitution.

And October 7, 1776 is of special significance to this commemorative session. On that date the first General Assembly under the new Virginia Constitution convened on this site.

Perhaps you will understand if I mention another important anniversary. In November of this year, we celebrate the 50th birthday of Colonial Williamsburg.

It is fitting that the Nation's 200th Birthday and Colonial Williamsburg's 50th should fall in the same year. There is the closest kinship between the two. The prime function of the Restoration is to convey to each generation a better understanding of our heritage, so much of which is rooted here.

It is not inappropriate, in the presence of this distinguished gathering, to pay tribute to the vision of two remarkable men: Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

Dr. Goodwin inspired Mr. Rockefeller to undertake the Restoration, which became a reality through Mr. Rockefeller's vision and generosity.

Mr. Rockefeller once said that the greatest value of the historic area was not the physical restoration, but the living lesson of Williamsburg: one that teaches "the patriotism, high purpose and unselfish devotion of our forefathers to the common good."

This is the lesson we intend to emphasize with visitors here this year.

Against this background, I extend an especially warm welcome to all of you. I know I speak the views of the officials and the citizens of Williamsburg, James City and York Counties, well represented here today. Also, I speak for the officers and Trustees of Colonial Williamsburg.

We are uniquely privileged to say WELCOME to you, Mr. President, and to Governor Godwin, Mr. Speaker and Members of the General Assembly of Virginia, the Chief Justice and Justices and to the other dignitaries and guests who have assembled here this afternoon. We extend this welcome in the spirit of George Mason's words as he reflected on what happened here in 1776 when he said, "We seem to have been treading on enchanted ground."

It is a great honor to have you all here.

REMARKS BY MILLS E. GODWIN, JR., GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

Mr. President, Mr. Justice Powell, Mr. Speaker of the House of Delegates, Mr. President of the State Senate, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Again we gather in Williamsburg to pay homage, each in his own way, to past events, and thereby to deepen our awareness of who we are and from whence we came.

Again, we come in a spirit of pilgrimage, citizen and elected official alike, to examine in the quiet of our consciences whether we measure up to the standards set for us so long ago.

For the members of the General Assembly here present, it is a day of contemplation that in this colonial capital two centuries ago this year, their predecessors first met as the legislative body for a new State.

Beyond that, they are conscious, too, that in the dim recesses of time, the first representative and legislative body in the New World assembled a few miles away in a church on Jamestown Island.

I welcome all who come in the spirit of these remembrances.

Speaking to their meaning for us we have heard the first resident Virginian to be appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States in 112 years.

As an added historical footnote, Virginia has produced eight presidents of the United States. In a moment, for the first time ever in its history, the General Assembly of Virginia will hear in person the words of a President while still in office.

His presence adds a luster, unique in all the world, that only the office he holds reflects.

To our President, to the nation's First Lady, to an illustrious Virginia jurist and to his lady, I extend a warm and personal welcome.

Your coming indeed does us high honor. Again today these quarters are crowded, as they must have been two centuries ago, when a new nation was conceived in hot debate.

The words of that day, to which we keep returning, were spoken to the men and women of thirteen struggling colonies, but within their cadences echo the cries of martyrs through the centuries of man's long struggle to be free.

Those same words have spelled hope to many peoples in the more recent history of that struggle. They spell faith to many peoples who call upon America today.

Two centuries ago, freedom's meaning was clear. The issues stood out in stark relief, and a virgin continent waited to become a testing ground.

Now freedom has taken on new meaning and new dimensions.

Yet here the concept of freedom is again within our grasp. We know its measure and its price, and from this vantage point, we can see, through the conflicting claims, which way its course is laid.

We know it is indivisible, that peace and justice are possible only when all men are free—free from want, free from fear, whether of the excesses of their government or the lawlessness of their neighbors, free from tyranny in any form, and free from the lethargy which permits evil to flourish because good men will not act.

To give deep meaning to our faith, each one of us needs some place of quiet communion with past victories over adversity, some example that frees us from the meshes of our own doubts and fears.

May the remembrances of this day rekindle in our hearts the conviction that in our own time as well, a divided people will again reunite, and in doing so, become stronger still.

May this commemorative session and our nation's bicentennial join together to remind us that our mission now is to keep our balance and our faith, as Americans have for more than two centuries.

The events of recent history tell us that



we must. Our own past history tells us that we surely will.

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT BEFORE THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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The Virginians created a new way of life strikingly different from the lives of the common people of Europe of that day. When the first settlers landed at nearby Jamestown, they brought the seeds of an idea that would make men strive for local control over the fate of local people.

America's most moving chronicle is how Virginians defied the centralized authority represented by royal governors and tax collectors appointed by a king on another continent. The momentous events that began in Virginia culminated in this great Bicentennial.

The process that started in 1619 led to Patrick Henry's defiant outcry for liberty or death, to George Mason's Virginia declaration of rights, to Thomas Jefferson's role in formulating our Declaration of Independence, and the services of yet another member of Burgesses, George Washington, as Commander-in-Chief and the first President of the United States of America.

As 38th President, I commend those whose initiative and patriotism has preserved and restored Colonial Williamsburg. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation serves the world by vividly reconstructing America's heritage.

Yet, in this Bicentennial year, we must do much more than maintain the treasured structures of our national legacy. We must revive the cherished values of the American Revolution with a resurgence of the spirit that rang forth in the streets of Williamsburg in Colonial times. I commend the instructive creed of the Colonial Williamsburg foundation: "That the future may learn from the past." We venerate the contributions of the founding fathers with timely and appropriate words of tribute. To keep faith, we must strive for the responsible self-government that they sought.

Patrick Henry, advocating national unity in Philadelphia, said: "I am not a Virginian, but an American." I believe that Patrick Henry would take one look at today's America and proclaim: "I am not only an American, but also a Virginian who believes in local control over the fate of local people."

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to your State Government all power not bestowed upon the national Government.

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When our State Constitutions were adopted, great care was taken to preserve fundamental principles of self-government. The States demonstrated that the real strength of American self-rule is that truly free people do not make a contract with a centralized Government but only among themselves.

The founding fathers favored what they called "mild Government." Their premise was that you can only achieve "mild Government" if you maintain local Government so responsive that the National Government is limited in scope. They believed in the ability of individuals to govern themselves. In recent years during an era of rapid change, more and more people looked to Washington to solve local problems. The view of too many was that the world's richest and most powerful Nation could do anything and do it instantly. Too much was expected and too much was promised.

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If this course is pursued, it will mean much less incentive to create capital and jobs and much more inflation. Two hundred years ago, men of vision understood that poverty is abolished by economic growth, not by economic redistribution. They knew that only a self-disciplined person can create a society in which ordered liberty will promote both economic prosperity and political participation at every level.

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Our Nation's founders believed that civic virtue was a willingness to suspend the pursuit of immediate personal interest and personal gain for the common good.

An excellent theme for this Bicentennial would be the revival of civic virtue.

American self-government is the most stirring and successful political experiment in history, but its ultimate success requires new concentration on duties and responsibilities as well as demands and desires.

We must regain the same willingness to work as those who built a colonial capital on this site, the same open mind as those who envisioned our freedom, the same sense of responsibility as those who preserved it. We must enshrine our rights but carry out our duties.

Let us evaluate what is possible with the common sense balance of what is practical.

As a young Congressman, I listened in the 1950's to the warnings of President Eisenhower. He said unless we preserve the traditional power and basic responsibilities of State Government, we would not retain the kind of America previously known. We would have, instead, quite another kind of America.

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We must, above all, see that Government remains responsive to the real and legitimate needs of the American people. And we must make sure that in meeting those needs, each level of Government performs its proper function—no more and no less. This is essential to preserve our system and to draw new energy from the source of all governmental power—the people.

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This trust is manifest in our flag with its alternate stripes and stars, which share the same galaxy. It is inherent in every presumption on which our free system is based. Much has changed in American life. Yet, the Bicentennial can remind us of those values we must preserve and the mutual cooperation and confidence that we must restore.

Any real Bicentennial observance demands the capture of the new spirit from the old. It is the redemption, in a new reality, of the essence of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, of the Declaration of Independence and of the United States Constitution. These documents are something more than compacts of Government. They were, and still are, expressions of the will and the spirit of the people.

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Thank you for allowing me to share this enchanted ground with you in this enchanted year.

Thank you very much.

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND MILLS E. GODWIN, GOVERNOR OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

GOVERNOR GODWIN: Mr. President, distinguished friends one and all: It seems to me that in the two centuries that have passed which we celebrate today that this Commonwealth has had many great days. It had many great days two centuries ago, it has had many in the intervening years, but by any comparison, today and tonight must certainly rank with one of the great days in the history of the Commonwealth.

We have been truly honored by the presence here of the Chief Executive of the greatest land in the world today.

Suffice it for me to say no more than to express to him the appreciation of us all for his presence here.

Now, will you rise and join with me in giving a toast to the President of the United States of America.

THE PRESIDENT: Governor Godwin and distinguished citizens of the great Commonwealth of Virginia: There is no way that I can adequately express my appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this wonderful day in the history of the Commonwealth. I have had a long experience with wonderful people from this State, people in private life as well as in public life. It has always been a great thrill to me to have lived in part in the Commonwealth and to have seen this great State grow and become a tremendous influence and have a great impact on our Union.

In coming down here I had the opportunity to do a little more reading about the great history of Virginia and it is a thrill and it is an inspiration to have been a very small part of a great history of a great State—one of our 13 Colonies—of a growing, burgeoning, vitally important part of our 50 States.

I thank you all for your hospitality and I thank you, Governor Godwin, for your very generous comments. I wish you all the very best in our third century of a great history of a great Commonwealth in a great country.

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