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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

1100 Waterway Boulevard, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

317-634-1100

April 6, 1976

Mrs. Margita White
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. White:

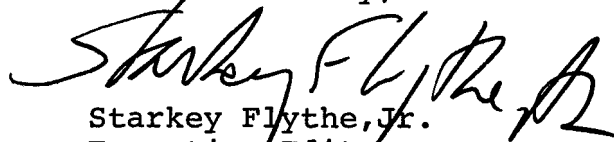
Thank you for speaking with me today. We are sending a xerox of our working mock-up of the bicentennial issue cover.

As you can see by looking at the cover lines, this issue will contain excerpts from historic Post issues written by famous Americans. It is entirely apolitical and one we are doing our best to make as beautiful and memorable as possible.

It would be a great honor to have even a few words from President Ford to keynote this issue. It might be a look backward at our beginnings or a hopeful speculation about our future. We would feature President Ford's editorial on the cover and as the beginning of the magazine.

I hope you will be able to send us something soon. Feel free to call at any time. We are really looking forward to having President Ford join his predecessors as a Saturday Evening Post contributor.

Yours sincerely,


Starkey Flythe, Jr.
Executive Editor

SF:bw

encl.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

1976

Founded A.D. 1728 by Benj. Franklin

\$1.25

**SPECIAL ISSUE
THE BEST OF THE POST
1728 to 1976:**

**MARK TWAIN
EDGAR ALLAN POE
HERMAN MELVILLE
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER
THOMAS EDISON
HENRY FORD
ORVILLE WRIGHT
CHARLES LINDBERGH
O. HENRY
BABE RUTH
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD
WILLIAM FAULKNER
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
MARY PICKFORD**



P.C.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Neta:

Attached is the final office
copy of the article for the
SATURDAY EVENING POST.

Let's please make a file
for it.

Thanks.

Gail

P.C.

final

This Bicentennial celebration of the birth of the United States of America is more than a parade of our national past. It is a preview of our future.

Whenever I am reminded of one of the great events or outstanding accomplishments of our history, and as I travel around this great country today, I ask myself: If we have come so far in 200 years, how much more can we achieve for our posterity?

If we can only discern clearly the secret of our unique success as a nation, if we can identify and perpetuate the fundamental force that has powered our progress, surely there are no limits to how much farther we can go.

The stirring events of 1776 signified more than just another colonial uprising, and one more parting of kindred peoples. The American Revolution was launched and guided by some of the ablest and best educated people in the colonies; they had English law and the English language in common, but

for about 150 years they had been growing more and more different -- in their ways of life, in their economic interests, and in their political institutions.

History, which is mostly written by the learned about the victors, leads us to ascribe the success of our Revolution to the Founding Fathers and their wisdom and foresight, plus the iron determination and leadership of George Washington. We cannot honor them enough, but it is important to remember that final success in that struggle, and in the many struggles that have followed throughout these 200 years, was due to the strength and support of ordinary men and women who were motivated by three powerful impulses -- personal freedom, self-government and national unity.

The development of these ideas on the virgin American continent has been characterized as the greatest political experiment in all history, but it was more than that; it involved a social and economic revolution far more profound than

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The American assertion that "all men are created equal" was a daring one in 1776, but it had ancient antecedents even as it has modern distortions. Far more revolutionary was the notion that men and women, despite their disparate interests and individual selfish motives, are nevertheless capable in a free society of uniting and governing themselves for the common good.

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That idea was individual independence.

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French historian, wrote of our beginnings: "In that land, the great experiment was to be made, by civilized men, of the attempt to construct society on a new basis."

Over the decades the great experiment has continued, enduring many severe tests. Could such a society endure half slave and half free? Could a vast mixture of nationalities and religions and colors and cultures become one nation? Could it escape being consumed by the materialism of its own natural riches?

The United States of America has survived, but the great experiment has not finally succeeded. It is still going on. Challenge and adversity have given us confidence and experience. From every testing we have emerged a stronger and, I believe, a better nation.

During our first century of Independence, we pushed Westward from the Atlantic seaboard with relentless energy into

the Pacific and the Arctic Sea. We did not create colonies, but into these areas transplanted our peculiar political institutions; the sovereign people; representative government at all levels; tripartite government with separate executive, legislative and judicial branches; fundamental rights and liberties guaranteed by State as well as national Constitutions.

In turn the new territories became States, their frontier spirit changing and broadening our original political institutions. Inevitably, the moral defect of the Constitution was rectified by a tragic fraternal war, and a more perfect Union of free citizens became basic law.

Those first hundred years might be called the century of political independence -- the development of free institutions responsible to the people, and the participation of more and more citizens in the process of self-government.

Our second century of independence, some of which we have lived for ourselves, was pre-eminently a century of unprecedented economic and technological growth.

The explosion of productivity and knowledge that began with the Industrial Revolution and the harnessing of new kinds of energy has been felt worldwide, but it was the United States of America that set the pace. Not only did our factories and farms surpass all others, but the wealth they created was more equitably shared than in any other form of economic order.

Both these achievements of our second century were possible because of the climate of political freedom we enjoyed, and because of the persistence of the original and uniquely American idea of self-reliance and individual initiative. So our second hundred years as a nation can be called our century of economic independence, giving us the highest material level of well-being in the world.

What will our third century of independence bring? We cannot know the answer, any more than the legendary Betsy Ross could know ^{the} ~~her~~ Flag, with 50 stars, would one day be implanted on the Moon. But I would like to think of it as the century of individual independence.

In the course of making vast advances in our political and economic institutions, we have lost some of our most precious resource, the identity and individuality of each and every American. We must reassert our inalienable right to do our own thing, with all respect for the same rights of others. We must resist the pressures of conformity whether they come from massive government, massive business, massive labor, massive education or massive communications.

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