

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “9/6/74 - Reconvening of the Continental Congress, Philadelphia, PA” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

*Mayor Rizzo
Gov. Schep &
other Distinguished
Governors
members of the Congress.*

DINNER HONORING THE
RECONVENING OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA, THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE, WAS THE CRADLE

OF AMERICAN LIBERTY. LOVE AND LIBERTY ARE TWO PRETTY GOOD

WORDS WITH WHICH TO START A NATION.

I LEARNED IN SCHOOL THAT THE FIRST SHOTS OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION WERE FIRED AT CONCORD, THE LAST AT YORKTOWN. BUT IT
WAS IN PHILADELPHIA THAT 56 PATRIOTS FROM 12 OF THE ORIGINAL 13
COLONIES CONVENED TWO CENTURIES AGO TO PROTEST THE MILITARY COERCION
OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY AND TO TAKE UNITED ECONOMIC ACTION AGAINST THE
MOTHER COUNTRY. BOTH GEORGE WASHINGTON AND JOHN ADAMS SOMETIMES SLEPT
HERE.

*In some
the history books show*

"THE CONGRESS," JOHN ADAMS WROTE HOME TO HIS WIFE
ABIGAIL, "IS TEDIOUS BEYOND EXPRESSION, THIS ASSEMBLY IS LIKE NO
OTHER THAT EVER EXISTED. EVERY MAN IN IT IS A GREAT MAN, AN ORATOR, A
CRITIC, A STATESMAN; AND THEREFORE EVERY MAN UPON EVERY QUESTION MUST
SHOW HIS ORATORY, HIS CRITICISM, AND HIS POLITICAL ABILITIES."

"THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS," ADAMS CONCLUDED ~~WITH DISGUST,~~ **WEARILY,**

"IS THAT BUSINESS IS DRAWN AND SPUN OUT TO AN IMMEASURABLE LENGTH."

SPEAKING AS A FORMER CONGRESSMAN, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT
MORE THAN ONCE IN THE LAST 25 YEARS -- ESPECIALLY AFTER A LONG
NIGHT OF DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES -- I HAVE FOUND
MYSELF SAYING PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING TO MY WIFE, BETTY.

ONLY THE NAMES HAVE CHANGED -- THAT AND THE FACT THAT JOHN
ADAMS NEVER HAD TO FIX HIS OWN BREAKFAST.

YES, THERE WAS PLENTY OF PESSIMISM IN THE LAND IN 1774
WHEN THAT FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS GATHERED IN THE CITY TAVERN
OVER THERE. AND THE PROBLEMS THEY FACED WERE ENOUGH TO DRIVE **THE**
ST
BRAVE PATRIOTS TO A TAVERN.

INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, THE 13 COLONIES WERE DIVIDED
BY CLASS, BY TRADITION, BY RELIGION, BY ETHNIC ORIGINS, AND BY
ECONOMIC INTERESTS. AND AS FOR A CENTRAL STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT,
THEY HAD TO MAKE THAT UP AS THEY WENT ALONG.

ON THE OPENING DAY OF THE 1ST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, WHEN THE
COUNTDOWN TO OUR INDEPENDENCE BEGAN, PATRICK HENRY STRUCK THE COMMON CHORD.
IN HIS OPENING SPEECH HE DECLARED: "THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN
VIRGINIANS, PENNSYLVANIANS, NEW YORKERS AND NEW ENGLANDERS ARE
NO MORE. I AM NOT A VIRGINIAN, ^{I AM} ~~A~~ AN AMERICAN."

THIS IS A **U** UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO THE ATTITUDE OF THE CONGRESS.

THEIR DETERMINATION OF ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL, THE PUNITIVE ACTS

THAT WERE DIRECTED AT MASSACHUSETTS AND THE CLOSING OF

BOSTON HARBOR WOULD HAVE DIVERTED TRADE AND COMMERCE TO OTHER PORTS --

NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA, BALTIMORE AND NORFOLK, ^{*unselfishly*} YET, ALL THE COLONIES

KNEW THAT ANY SUCH BENEFITS WOULD BE ONLY TEMPORARY, ~~SHORT LIVED~~ THE CAUSE OF

BOSTON WAS THE CAUSE OF THEM ALL.

HAS
AMERICA ~~NEEDS~~ THAT SENSE OF UNITY TODAY. THE CAUSE OF

THE SOUTH IS THE CAUSE OF THE NORTH; THE CAUSE OF THE WEST IS THE
CAUSE OF THE EAST. WE ARE TODAY, AS WERE OUR FOREFATHERS, BOUND
TOGETHER IN ~~THIS~~ THE GREAT AMERICAN EXPERIMENT.

REMAINS

YET THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION **A** A LESSON AS TO WHAT A FEW

DEDICATED PEOPLE CAN DO, TODAY WE NUMBER 50 STATES AND SPAN A

CONTINENT. WE REACH NORTHWARD IN THE PACIFIC TO ALASKA AND WEST

TO THE ISLANDS OF HAWAII, OUR PEOPLE NUMBER MORE THAN 210 MILLION.

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO OUR POPULATION IN THOSE 13 COLONIES
WAS TWO AND A HALF MILLION. HISTORIANS ESTIMATE THAT OF THAT NUMBER
ONLY ONE-THIRD PROVIDED THE STRENGTH, FIBER AND DEDICATION OF THE
REVOLUTION -- THE PATRIOTS. ONE-THIRD FELT DEEPLY THEIR ALLEGIANCE
TO THE CROWN. SOME SERVED IN THE KING'S ARMY, SOME FLED TO ENGLAND,
CANADA OR OTHER BRITISH COLONIES -- THE LOYALISTS. THE OTHER ONE-THIRD
SAT ON THE FENCE. BUT HISTORY HAS LONG FORGOTTEN THE TIMID.

LAST DECEMBER THE CONGRESS CREATED A FEDERAL AMERICAN
REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL ADMINISTRATION TO COORDINATE AND FACILITATE
BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES. THIS NEW ADMINISTRATION IS NOW HARD AT WORK
ON A NON-PARTISAN BASIS, WITH THE CONGRESS AND THE BICENTENNIAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN EACH OF THE 50 STATES, THE TERRITORIES, THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO.

ALREADY SOME 1300 CITIES, TOWNS, VILLAGES, COUNTIES AND SOME
INDIAN TRIBES, EMBRACING MORE THAN A THIRD OF OUR TOTAL POPULATION,
HAVE MET THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR ~~1. ESTABLISHED~~ OFFICIAL "BICENTENNIAL
COMMUNITIES." JOHN WARNER TELLS ME THAT THE LIST GROWS EACH MONTH.
THOUSANDS OF PROGRAMS AND EVENTS ARE CROWDING THE BICENTENNIAL CALENDAR.

A GROWING NUMBER OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS ARE PLANNING TO PARTICIPATE. THIS IS WELCOME NEWS BECAUSE THERE IS NO NATION WHICH IS NOT A PART OF OUR HERITAGE; THE BLOOD OF ALL PEOPLES FLOWS IN OUR VEINS; WHATEVER WE ARE, OR HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH, WE OWE **MEASURE** IN LARGE ~~DEGREE~~ TO OUR RICHLY DIVERSE HERITAGE FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

The beauty of Joseph's cloak is ^{its} ~~of~~ many colors.

BUT MAY I OFFER MY OWN IDEA ON HOW BEST TO COMMEMORATE THE
BICENTENNIAL. LET US ALL, DURING THE COMING MONTHS, STUDY CAREFULLY
THE CHARACTER AND QUALITIES OF THE MEN WHO FOUNDED THIS NATION.
LET US TRY TO GRASP THE STUFF THAT WAS INSIDE OF THEM. AND THEN LET
US RELEASE THAT SAME SPIRIT WITHIN OURSELVES. WE HAVE THE SAME
CAPACITY FOR UNITY, DISCIPLINE, AND SACRIFICE. LET US SHOW THE WORLD
THAT THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAS NOT CHANGED.

WHAT WE ARE REALLY DOING AS WE CELEBRATE OUR NATION'S 200TH
BIRTHDAY IS LAYING THE CORNERSTONE OF AMERICA'S THIRD CENTURY, AND
EVERY CITIZEN OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY SHOULD HAVE HIS OR HER NAME
INSCRIBED ON THAT IMAGINARY STONE, SO THAT ALL WHO COME AFTER US CAN SAY,
AS WE SAY OF THE 56 WHO LABORED FOR US HERE: "THEY GAVE OF THEMSELVES.
THEY CARED."

I AM ESPECIALLY GLAD THAT WE ARE LAUNCHING THE CELEBRATION
OF OUR BICENTENNIAL PERIOD HERE, WHERE THE FIRST TWO OF MY PREDECESSORS
AS PRESIDENT LABORED AS MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

I AM GLAD THAT THIS PERIOD OF NATIONAL REDEDICATION, WHICH WILL
EXTEND TO JULY 4, 1976, BEGINS ON THIS ALMOST FORGOTTEN DATE, WHEN
THE COLONIAL DELEGATES WRESTLED WITH THEIR COMMON PROBLEMS OF
SKYROCKETING PRICES, SHRINKING PURCHASING POWER, SHORTAGES,
HOARDING AND FINANCIAL SPECULATION.

AND WOMEN

THE MEN OF 1774 WERE INFLATION FIGHTERS BEFORE THEY TOOK
UP ARMS AGAINST THE BRITISH REDCOATS. THEY MET VOLUNTARILY TO WAGE
ECONOMIC WARFARE FOR THEIR FUTURE FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY EVEN BEFORE
THE LIBERTY BELL TOLLED THE BIRTH OF A NEW NATION. THE SPIRIT OF 1774
WAS A SUDDEN QUICKENING OF AMERICAN UNITY IN THE FACE OF COMMON
CALAMITY, OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PATRIOTISM AND DETERMINATION OF THE
PEOPLE THEMSELVES, AND OF MUTUAL WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS AND MAKE
SACRIFICES FOR THE GOOD OF ALL.

THERE ARE TWO IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER
ABOUT OUR AMERICAN REVOLUTION. IT WAS NOT A REVOLUTION
TO TEAR DOWN WHAT THE COLONISTS HAD, BUT TO PRESERVE
THE FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS OF FREE ENGLISHMEN AND TO EXPAND
THE MATERIAL PROSPERITY THEY HAD ALREADY ENJOYED FOR
GENERATIONS ON THIS BOUNTIFUL CONTINENT. IT WAS NOT A
REVOLUTION TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR THEMSELVES BUT TO MAKE
SURE THESE BLESSINGS WOULD CONTINUE FOR THEIR CHILDREN
AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

THE MEN WHO GATHERED HERE 200 YEARS AGO PUT IT

THESE
INTO WORDS:

IT IS A DUTY, THEY WROTE, "WHICH WE OWE TO GOD,
OUR COUNTRY, OURSELVES AND POSTERITY...TO MAINTAIN, DEFEND
AND PRESERVE THOSE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES,
FOR WHICH MANY OF OUR FATHERS FOUGHT, BLED AND DIED, AND
TO HAND THEM DOWN ENTIRE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS."

*What beautiful words. Words which they
made into deeds.*

IN SHORT, THE INFLATION FIGHTERS OF 1774 WERE
NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE INFLATION FIGHTERS OF 1974
WHO STARTED A SERIES OF CONFERENCES IN WASHINGTON YESTERDAY.
THEN AS NOW THERE WERE NO EASY ANSWERS, THEN AS NOW THEY
HAD TO DEPEND HEAVILY ON POPULAR UNDERSTANDING AND PUBLIC
SUPPORT. JOHN RUTLEDGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA MIGHT HAVE GIVEN
THE SAME SPEECH AT THE OPENING WHITE HOUSE INFLATION
CONFERENCE YESTERDAY THAT HE GAVE HERE 200 YEARS EARLIER:

RUTLEDGE SAID:

"WE HAVE NO LEGAL AUTHORITY; AND OBDEIENCE TO
OUR DETERMINATIONS WILL ONLY FOLLOW THE REASONABLENESS,
THE APPARENT UTILITY AND NECESSITY OF THE MEASURES WE
ADOPT. WE HAVE NO COERCIVE OR LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY, OUR
CONSTITUENTS ARE BOUND ONLY IN HONOR TO OBSERVE OUR
DETERMINATION."

WHAT WERE SOME OF THESE DETERMINATIONS? I HAVE
BEEN BROWSING THROUGH THE JOURNAL OF THE FIRST CONTINENTAL
CONGRESS AND, I MUST SAY TO MY FORMER COLLEAGUES, IT READS
on the Congress
especially when I was a contributor.
A LOT EASIER THAN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. BUT EXCEPT
FOR THE ELEGANT LANGUAGE OF A MORE ELOQUENT AGE, IT DEALS
WITH REAL PROBLEMS THAT ARE AMAZINGLY CONTEMPORARY.
LISTEN TO THIS:

"RESOLVED, THAT ALL MANUFACTURES OF THIS COUNTRY
BE SOLD AT REASONABLE PRICES, SO THAT NO UNDUE ADVANTAGE
BE TAKEN OF A FUTURE SCARCITY OF GOODS.

"SUCH AS ARE VENDERS OF GOODS OR MERCHANDISE
WILL NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SCARCITY OF GOODS, THAT
MAY BE OCCASIONED BY THIS ASSOCIATION, BUT WILL SELL THE
SAME AT THE RATES WE HAVE BEEN RESPECTIVELY ACCUSTOMED TO
DO FOR TWELVE MONTHS LAST PAST. --- AND IF ANY VENDER OF
GOODS OR MERCHANDISE SHALL SELL ANY SUCH GOODS ON HIGHER
TERMS.....NO PERSON OUGHT, NOR WILL ANY OF US DEAL WITH
ANY SUCH PERSON, OR HIS OR HER FACTOR OR AGENT." (PAUSE)



LIBERATED WOMEN, PLEASE NOTE: "HIS OR HER FACTOR OR
AGENT: WE'VE HEARD AN AWFUL LOT OF TALK HERE ABOUT
OUR FOUNDING FATHERS. LET'S NOT FORGET OUR FOUNDING
MOTHERS. OBVIOUSLY THEY DIDN'T.

THE RESOLUTIONS CONTINUE:

"THAT A COMMITTEE BE CHOSEN IN EVERY COUNTY,
CITY, AND TOWN, BY THOSE WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO VOTE FOR
REPRESENTATIVES IN THE LEGISLATURE, WHOSE BUSINESS IT SHALL
BE ATTENTIVELY TO OBSERVE THE CONDUCT OF ALL PERSONS
TOUCHING THIS ASSOCIATION;...."

"WE WILL, IN OUR SEVERAL STATIONS, ENCOURAGE
FRUGALITY, ECONOMY, AND INDUSTRY, AND PROMOTE AGRICULTURE,
ARTS, AND THE MANUFACTURES OF THIS COUNTRYAND WILL
DISCOUNTENANCE AND DISCOURAGE EVERY SPECIES OF EXTRAVAGANCE
AND DISSIPATION,....") (, , ,

THESE CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIRST CONTINENTAL
CONGRESS ARE CHOSEN AT RANDOM, BUT THEY CONVEY THE
SENSE OF URGENCY AND UNITY WHICH EXISTED HERE TWO
CENTURIES AGO.

I BELIEVE THERE IS THE SAME SENSE OF URGENCY
AND UNITY IN AMERICA TODAY, I HAVE ENCOUNTERED IT
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, I FEEL IT IN WASHINGTON, I KNOW
IT IS THE REASON FOR THIS DISTINGUISHED GATHERING TONIGHT
IN THE SHADOW OF INDEPENDENCE HALL.

YOU WHO ARE GOVERNORS, SENATORS, REPRESENTATIVES,
MAYORS, AND OTHER PUBLIC OFFICIALS ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE
HAVE TOLD ME YOU SHARE THIS SENSE OF URGENCY AND UNITY. SO
I HAVE COME HERE TONIGHT TO ASK YOUR HELP, AND THE HELP
OF OUR 210 MILLION COUNTRYMEN, NOT ONLY IN CELEBRATING
WHAT'S RIGHT ABOUT AMERICA IN 1974, BUT IN CORRECTING
WHAT'S WRONG.

THE TYRANNY OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT AND CROWN

IN 1774 ANIMATED OUR ANCESTORS. ~~THE TYRANNY OF DOUBLE~~

DIGIT INFLATION IS OUR COMMON ENEMY IN 1974. INFLATION

IS THE CRUELEST KIND OF TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION.

I HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE THE FIRST PRIORITY OF MY
MONTH-OLD ADMINISTRATION AN ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST INFLATION.
LIKE THE PATRIOTS WHO MET HERE 200 YEARS AGO, WE MAY SEEM
TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY AND TOO DELIBERATELY, BUT I HOPE NO ONE
WILL UNDERSTIMATE THE GENERALSHIP OR FIGHTING ABILITY OF
AMERICANS TODAY THE WAY SOME DID IN 1774. I WARN YOU, AS
WISE OLD BEN FRANKLIN DID, THAT IF WE DO NOT ALL HANG
TOGETHER WE WILL CERTAINLY HANG SEPARATELY.

BUT WE WILL NOT HANG SEPARATELY NOR WILL WE FALL
DIVIDED. WE ARE GOING AFTER THE PUBLIC ENEMY OF INFLATION
IN 1974 AND WE WILL LICK HIM BEFORE JULY 4, 1976.

WE WILL HAVE OUR VALLEY FORGES, OUR SUMMER SOLDIERS AND
OUR SUNSHINE PATRIOTS. BUT WE ARE THE DESCENDANTS AND HEIRS,
SPIRITUALLY IF NOT GENELOGICALLY, OF THE PATRIOTS WHO ASSEMBLED
HERE 200 YEARS AGO TONIGHT.

AND WE MAY TRULY SAY, AS JOSEPH WARREN OF MASSACHUSETTS
WROTE IN THE SUFFOLK RESOLVES, DELIVERED ^{TO} ~~AT~~ THE FIRST CONTINENTAL
CONGRESS BY PAUL REVERE, THAT ^{ON} THE FORTITUDE, ON THE WISDOM
AND ON THE EXERTIONS OF THIS IMPORTANT DAY, IS SUSPENDED THE FATE OF
THIS NEW WORLD, AND OF UNBORN MILLIONS."

WE MUST NOT LET THEM DOWN.

WITH YOUR HELP, WE WILL WIN ^{OUR} ~~THE~~ FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION.

WHAT BETTER WAY CAN WE BEGIN OUR THIRD CENTURY OF

INDEPENDENCE AS A NATION, OF LIBERTY UNDER GOD, AND BROTHERLY LOVE

FOR ALL?

#