

The original documents are located in Box 9, folder “5/20/75 - Charlotte - Mecklenburg, North Carolina, Bicentennial Committee Picnic Luncheon” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU, REP. MARTIN

GOV. HOLSHOUSER —

SENATOR HELMS —

SENATOR MORGAN —

REP. BROYHILL

REP. ROSE

REP. ANDREWS

REP. NEAL

REP. HEFNER

FORMER REP. JONAS

MRS. HAIR —

MAYOR BELK —

CHAIRMAN WHITNEY —

REV. BILLY GRAHAM —

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

A large, handwritten signature or scribble in black ink, positioned on the right side of the page. It appears to be a stylized name, possibly 'Gerald R. Ford', written vertically.

REMARKS AT CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG

NORTH CAROLINA BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE PICNIC LUNCHEON

MAY 20, 1975

- 1 -

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE IN CHARLOTTE TODAY TO ENJOY
THE SPIRIT OF THIS UNIQUE OBSERVANCE OF OUR NATIONAL
BICENTENNIAL.

Humble - Many Presidents

I CONGRATULATE MECKLENBURG COUNTY AND ALL OF
NORTH CAROLINA ON THE BICENTENNIAL ENTHUSIASM DEMONSTRATED

HERE. *today*

Magnificent

great - 3 -

I SEE THIS ^{*great*} GATHERING AS A SYMBOL OF THE PRIDE OF
AMERICANS IN THEIR COMMUNITY, \ IN THEIR STATE AND IN THEIR

NATION. IN RECENT YEARS, AMERICA HAS UNDERGONE CHANGE

AFTER CHANGE -- SOME STILL TAKING PLACE WITH RAPID AND ALMOST

BEWILDERING SPEED.

BUT AMIDST SUCH CHANGE, OUR MOST CHERISHED VALUES HAVE
REMAINED AS STEADFAST AS WHEN INSTITUTED BY THE FATHERS OF
OUR COUNTRY.

I REFER TO AMERICA'S CAPACITY FOR UNITY IN DIVERSITY, FOR
COURAGE IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGE, FOR DECENCY IN THE MIDST
OF DISSENSION, FOR OPTIMISM IN SPITE OF REVERSES AND FOR
CREATIVITY IN ADAPTING TO THE RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD IN
WHICH WE LIVE. OUR DESTINY, IN THIS YEAR OF OUR
BICENTENNIAL, IS TO EMERGE AS AN EVEN GREATER REPUBLIC.

WHEN THE UNITED STATES CELEBRATED ITS FIRST ONE
HUNDRED YEARS IN 1876, THE SOUTH WAS STILL RECOVERING FROM
THE TRAGIC WAR BETWEEN THE STATES. THIS WAS AMERICA'S
MOST TERRIBLE ORDEAL. YET AMERICA -- AND THE SOUTH --
HAVE RISEN AGAIN.

NORTH CAROLINA IS A SHOWCASE OF A STATE THAT
REVERES THE VALUES OF THE PAST WHILE LEADING THE WAY TOWARD
A PROGRESSIVE FUTURE.

THE TAR HEEL TENACITY IS THE AMERICAN TENACITY. THE
TAR HEEL PRIDE IS THE AMERICAN PRIDE. AND THE TAR HEEL
MODERATION TYPIFIES AMERICA'S NEW REALISM.

THIS STATE, AND THE REST OF THE SOUTH, KNOWS
AT FIRST HAND THE CHANGES OF WHICH I SPEAK. I AM PROUD
OF THE GREAT BREAKTHROUGHS IN EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY IN
THE SOUTH, A REGION WHICH TODAY NUMBERS MORE THAN SIXTY-
SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE, NEARLY ONE-THIRD OF THE AMERICAN
POPULATION.

67

THIS IS AN AREA WHERE FAMILY INCOME HAS INCREASED MORE IN
THE LAST QUARTER-CENTURY THAN IN ANY OTHER PART OF THE

UNITED STATES. TODAY, PERSONAL INCOME IS RISING MORE

RAPIDLY HERE THAN IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. SOUTHERNERS

-- INCLUDING THE TAR HEELS -- MUST BE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT!

IN FACT, MORE PEOPLE ARE TODAY MOVING INTO THE

SOUTH THAN AWAY FROM IT. THIS PART OF THE NATION IS

TODAY GROWING AS FAST AS THE WEST. *rapidly - more rapidly than most
of America.*

YOU HAVE SO MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO TAKE PRIDE

IN. IN SOUTHERN EDUCATION, EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL HAVE

220

INCREASED BY MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED TWENTY PERCENT IN THE

LAST QUARTER CENTURY -- FAR MORE THAN IN THE NATION AS A

WHOLE.

THE NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES HAS INCREASED AT A

MUCH GREATER RATE THAN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. THERE

ARE ~~ALSO~~ SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN THOSE ATTENDING

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

IN INDUSTRY, THE SOUTH HAS TODAY MOVED FROM A
BASIC AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY TO A MODERN INDUSTRIAL REGION
WHICH MANUFACTURES APPROXIMATELY ONE QUARTER OF OUR
NATION'S TOTAL OUTPUT. THIS IS A GREAT COMEBACK FROM
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF A CENTURY AGO.

I CITE THESE STATISTICS BECAUSE THEY VERIFY THE
POTENTIALITIES OF THE SOUTH -- AND OF ALL AMERICA, ~~FOR THAT~~
~~MATTER~~. BUT IT IS NOT STATISTICS THAT INSPIRES US
TODAY. IT IS THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE.

IT IS THE PATRIOTISM AND THE DEDICATION AND THE WILLPOWER OF
THE THIRTEEN ORIGINAL STATES WHICH STILL LIVE IN THE SOUTH
AND ACROSS AMERICA. IT IS THE VISION OF THE FUTURE
RATHER THAN A MIRROR OF THE PAST WHICH YOU HOLD. AND
I COMMEND YOU FOR IT.

AT THE TIME OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, SOME
SAID THAT AMERICA COULD NOT DEFY THE ODDS THAT CONFRONTED
US. THERE WERE SOME WHO WOULD ROLL OVER AND PROSTRATE
THEMSELVES IN SELF-PITY AND HOPELESSNESS. BUT THERE WERE
MANY MORE WHO SAID, "WE ARE AMERICANS. WE CAN DO IT!"

THEY WERE PROUD TO BE AMERICANS -- JUST AS YOU
~~HERE~~ TODAY ARE PROUD TO IDENTIFY YOURSELVES WITH THE
TRADITIONS WHICH MADE US GREAT AND THE NATIONAL CHARACTER
WHICH WILL KEEP US THAT WAY.

OUR CENTENNIAL IN 1876 WAS A TIME OF RENEWAL
AND REDEDICATION BY AMERICANS TO OUR HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS.
AMERICANS -- SOUTHERNERS, \ NORTHERNERS, \ EASTERNERS \ AND
WESTERNERS -- ALL LOOKED TO THE FUTURE.

AMERICA EMERGED FROM AN AGRICULTURAL AND
FRONTIER SOCIETY INTO AN INDUSTRIAL AGE. TOWNS EVOLVED
INTO GREAT CITIES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. RAIL
TRANSPORTATION AND THE TELEGRAPH TIED THIS VAST CONTINENT
TOGETHER.

TODAY, IT IS OUR TURN TO RENEW OUR PRIDE IN
AMERICA AND REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE FUTURE. OUR
CHALLENGE -- LIKE THE CENTENNIAL TASK ONE HUNDRED YEARS
AGO -- IS TO CREATE A NEW AGENDA FOR AMERICA'S THIRD
CENTURY. WE MUST RISE ABOVE THE DIVISIONS THAT HAVE
SCARRED OUR NATIONAL LIFE IN RECENT TIMES.

WE MUST ONCE AGAIN BECOME ONE PEOPLE -- STRONG AND
UNIFIED IN OUR NATIONAL PURPOSE.

THE NEW STRENGTH AND DYNAMISM OF THE SOUTH
COUPLED WITH YOUR CHERISHED TRADITIONS CAN HELP AMERICA
ACHIEVE THIS UNITY.

I LOOK TO YOU FOR LEADERSHIP IN FORGING A NEW DESTINY
FOR AMERICA FROM THE HERITAGE WE COMMEMORATE HERE TODAY.

I KNOW THAT THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY -- SO EVIDENT
IN NORTH CAROLINA AT THE TIME OF OUR REVOLUTION -- WILL
GUIDE US.

THOSE EARLY STIRRINGS OF PATRIOTISM AND DEDICATION TO OUR
WAY OF LIFE ARE STILL VERY MUCH WITH US. THE SOUTH AS
A REGION AND NORTH CAROLINA AS A STATE AND MECKLENBURG
AS A COUNTY WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE INSPIRATION TO OUR
NATION.

I JOIN IN WORKING WITH ALL SOUTHERNERS, AND
ALL OTHER AMERICANS, TO BUILD A BETTER TOMORROW.
TOGETHER, WE CAN DO IT! THANK YOU.

END OF TEXT

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 20, 1975

I must admit, I was a little apprehensive about coming to ~~THE HORNETS~~
NEST Charlotte after I heard about President Wilson's visit here on
May 20, 1916, 59 years ago today. Reportedly, it was a similar
outdoor ceremony, and members of the band, in their heavy ceremonial
garb, were dropping like flies from heat. Colonel ^{Thomas} Leroy Kirkpatrick,
the Mayor of Charlotte, stepped up to the rostrum to introduce
President Wilson, got a bit carried away with the festivities, and
spoke for 50 minutes!

Needless to say, the President barely had time for "hello" and
"good-bye" before he ran for his train which was ready to pull
out from the station. ~~I see why they called Charlotte the "Hornet's~~
~~Nest."~~

I sincerely thank Representative Martin for departing from that
precedent today.