

The original documents are located in Box 25, “3/13/76 - Remarks at Public Forum, Wilkes County, North Carolina” 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 Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections.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.

~~THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...~~

REMARKS TO PUBLIC FORUM

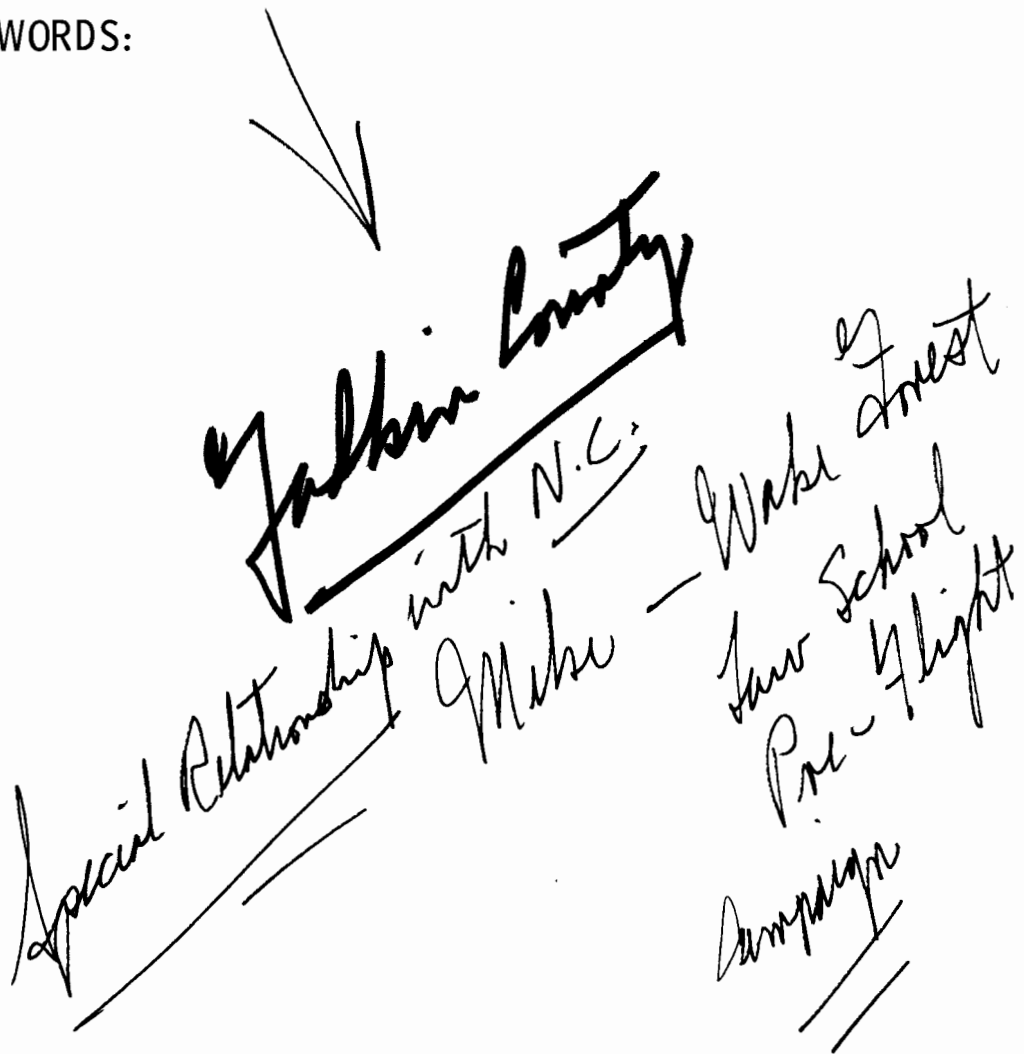
WILKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1976

- THANK YOU, GOVERNOR JIM HOLSHOUSER
- BILL ANDERSON
- HAL GREEN
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT'S A GREAT PLEASURE TO BE HERE IN
WILKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA -- AND IT IS VERY
OBVIOUS I AM AMONG FRIENDS.

THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT CAN BE SUMMED
UP IN A FEW WORDS:

Handwritten notes in cursive script. An arrow points from the top towards the word 'Falklin'. The text includes 'Falklin County', 'Special Relationship with N.C.', 'Mike', 'Wake Forest Law School Pre-flight Campaign', and 'I'.

Falklin County

Special Relationship with N.C.

Mike

Wake Forest Law School Pre-flight Campaign

I

- 1 (a) -

AS MUCH AS I BELIEVE IN A STRONG AND PROSPEROUS AMERICAN

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY -- I'M HERE TO SAY THAT THIS YEAR --

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON TO TRADE IN YOUR FORD /

ON A NEW MODEL.

AND LET ME ADD -- I'M PROUD TO SAY

THAT THIS IS ONE FORD / THAT'S EVEN BEEN ROAD-TESTED BY

RICHARD PETTY.

I'M HAPPY TO SAY

THAT RICHARD IS A MEMBER OF THE
PRESIDENT FORD STEERING COMMITTEE
HERE IN NORTH CAROLINA --
AND IT'S GREAT TO HAVE HIS SUPPORT.

AS I'VE GONE ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN

RECENT MONTHS, I'VE ENJOYED A NUMBER OF QUESTION-AND-ANSWER

SESSIONS WITH PEOPLE IN A GREAT MANY STATES. I'M ANXIOUS

TO DO THAT AGAIN TONIGHT, BUT FIRST LET ME MAKE ONE

OR TWO VERY BRIEF COMMENTS.

THE YEAR 1976 IS A VERY IMPORTANT,
VERY CRITICAL YEAR FOR AMERICA●

IT MARKS A TURNING POINT FOR OUR COUNTRY
AS WE ENTER THE LAST QUARTER OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND BEGIN
THE THIRD CENTURY OF AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE●

IT'S GOOD FOR US, SOMETIMES, TO TAKE STOCK
OF WHERE WE HAVE BEEN, WHERE WE ARE NOW, AND WHERE
WE ARE GOING -- AS PEOPLE AND AS A NATION.

AMERICA HAS COME A LONG, LONG WAY
IN THE LAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS.

WE'VE GROWN FROM A SMALL, POOR, WEAK
AND STRUGGLING COLLECTION OF COLONIES INTO THE GREATEST NATION
IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD + THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WE'VE COME THROUGH WARS, DEPRESSIONS,
DROUGHTS, RIOTS, ASSASSINATIONS, SCANDALS --
PRACTICALLY EVERYTHING THAT FATE COULD THROW AT US.

BUT WE'VE ALSO ENJOYED PHENOMENAL ECONOMIC,
TECHNOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL PROGRESS IN AMERICA, AND
THAT PROGRESS HAS MADE OUR WAY OF LIFE THE ENVY OF
ALL THE WORLD.

DESPITE ALL THE PROBLEMS WE'VE HAD,
I DON'T THINK ANY ONE OF US WOULD TRADE PLACES WITH
THE PEOPLE OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.

I wouldn't if you wouldn't

WE HEAR A LOT OF TALK THESE DAYS ABOUT

AMERICA BEING IN A STATE OF DECLINE. *That's wrong* WE HEAR THAT

AMERICA'S BEST DAYS ARE BEHIND US. *That's wrong* WE HEAR THAT

AMERICA IS ONLY A SECOND-RATE POWER IN THE WORLD TODAY. *That's wrong* 1

FRANKLY, I'M TIRED OF HEARING THOSE WHO

WOULD RUN DOWN AMERICA.

I'M PROUD OF AMERICA, AND I'M PROUD

TO BE AN AMERICAN, AND I KNOW YOU ARE, TOO.

I BELIEVE IN THIS COUNTRY.

I BELIEVE IN

ITS VALUES, ITS TRADITIONS, ITS INSTITUTIONS, ITS PEOPLE.

I BELIEVE IN AMERICA'S FUTURE.

WE HAVE THE CAPACITY IN THIS COUNTRY TO

DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING WE SET OUR MINDS TO DO.

AMERICA TODAY REMAINS THE BEST HOPE OF PEACE,

THE STRONGEST GUARDIAN OF FREEDOM, IN THE WORLD.

I AM PURSUING A POLICY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT AMERICA'S ^{*military*} ~~DEFENSIVE~~ CAPABILITIES

ARE SECOND TO NONE -- AND I INTEND TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

AMERICA'S STRENGTH IS MEASURED BY MORE

THAN ARMAMENTS ALONE.

AMERICA TODAY IS THE GREATEST AGRICULTURAL

POWER, THE MOST PROLIFIC PRODUCER OF FOOD AND FIBER

IN THE WORLD.

THAT IS A CREDIT NOT ONLY TO THE MASS-PRODUCTION

FARMER IN THE MIDWEST, BUT ALSO TO THE SMALL, FAMILY FARMER

RIGHT HERE IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA.

I WANT TO SEE THE FAMILY FARM SURVIVE

AND THRIVE IN AMERICA. I WANT TO MAKE IT EASIER

FOR PEOPLE TO PASS ON THEIR FARMS --

THE PRODUCT OF MANY YEARS OF HARD WORK AND LOVE AND FAITH --

TO THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS. I WANT TO MAKE IT EASIER

TO KEEP THOSE FARMS IN THE FAMILY, RATHER THAN SACRIFICING

THEM TO THE TAX COLLECTOR.

I'VE PROPOSED TWO MEASURES TO HELP PROMOTE

THAT RESULT.

FIRST, I PROPOSED THAT THE CONGRESS

ACT TO STRETCH OUT ESTATE TAX PAYMENTS, AT GREATLY REDUCED

INTEREST RATES, OVER A 25-YEAR PERIOD.

AND SECOND, I HAVE PROPOSED AN INCREASE

IN THE ESTATE-TAX EXEMPTION FROM 60,000 TO 150,000 DOLLARS.

THESE PROPOSALS, IF ENACTED, WOULD HELP

NOT ONLY FAMILY FARMS, BUT FAMILY BUSINESSES AS WELL.

I KNOW THAT FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES

CAN USE ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET. I WORKED IN

small, family owned

MY FATHER'S PAINT AND VARNISH COMPANY FOR A LOT OF YEARS,

AND I KNOW HOW TOUGH IT IS, BUT ALSO HOW REWARDING IT IS

TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY ENTERPRISE.

FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES, LIKE EVERY OTHER

SEGMENT OF OUR ECONOMY, SUFFERED HEAVILY IN THE WORST

RECESSION IN 40 YEARS.

BUT THANKS TO SOME STRONG, COMMON-SENSE

POLICIES I INITIATED AT THE OUTSET OF THE RECESSION,

AND THANKS TO THE DETERMINATION AND COURAGE OF THE

AMERICAN PEOPLE, WE ARE WORKING OUR WAY OUT OF THAT

ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY.

WITH ONE FAVORABLE INDICATOR AFTER ANOTHER

POINTING THE WAY, WE'RE ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY AND

PROSPERITY IN AMERICA, AND WE'RE PICKING UP SPEED EVERY DAY.

EVEN WITH THE SEVERE SETBACKS WE EXPERIENCED

RECENTLY, AMERICA TODAY IS STILL THE ^{*strongest + finest*} ~~RICHEST~~ NATION

IN THE WORLD.

I HAVE NEVER LOST FAITH IN THE SYSTEM

OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND PERSONAL INITIATIVE WHICH EARNED

THAT WEALTH IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND GAVE US THE HIGHEST

STANDARD OF LIVING IN THE WORLD.

I WILL DO ALL THAT I CAN TO SEE THAT

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS AND RED TAPE DO NOT ENSLAVE

FREE ENTERPRISE AND PERSONAL FREEDOM IN AMERICA.

THE HEAVY HAND OF GOVERNMENT HAS FOUND

ITS WAY INTO TOO MANY AREAS OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE.

IF THERE'S ONE THING WE MUST NEVER LOSE SIGHT
OF, IT'S THIS: THAT A GOVERNMENT BIG ENOUGH TO GIVE US
EVERYTHING WE WANT IS A GOVERNMENT BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE
FROM US EVERYTHING WE HAVE.

THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT WE WANT
IN AMERICA.

WE HAVE THE BEST SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

IN THE WORLD. IT IS A SYSTEM LAID OUT WITH GREAT CARE

AND PAID FOR AT GREAT PRICE BY PATRIOTS YEARNING FOR

FREEDOM.

IT IS A SYSTEM THAT CAN BE A POWERFUL
INSTRUMENT OF PROGRESS AND AN ENDURING SOURCE OF
STRENGTH AND SECURITY•

BUT IT MUST ALWAYS BE THE SERVANT --
AND NEVER THE MASTER -- OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE•

WE WANT THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE OUR OWN COURSE

IN OUR OWN LIVES, TO CHART OUR OWN FUTURE ON OUR OWN

TERMS, WITHOUT HAVING THE GOVERNMENT TELL US EVERYTHING

WE CAN AND CANNOT DO.

THE ELECTIONS OF 1976 WILL PLAY AN
IMPORTANT ROLE IN DECIDING WHAT COURSE WE CHART FOR
AMERICA'S FUTURE.

THE FUTURE I SEE IS ONE WHICH FINDS ALL
AMERICANS LIVING IN DIGNITY AND SECURITY AND HARMONY
AND IN PEACE.

I SEE A PEOPLE TAKING PRIDE IN THEIR WORK,
AND FINDING PLEASURE AND PURPOSE AND PROSPERITY
IN THEIR LIVES.

I SEE AN AMERICA WHICH CHERISHES THE
OLD VALUES OF HONESTY AND COMPASSION AND DETERMINATION
AND COURAGE.

I SEE AN AMERICA WHICH CONTINUES TO STAND
TALL AND STRONG AND FREE AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD•

I SEE AN AMERICA WHICH RISES TO ITS
CHALLENGES, FULFILLS ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TAKES
ADVANTAGE OF ITS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS IN EVERY
FIELD OF ENDEAVOR•

THESE ARE MY GOALS, AND THIS IS WHY I AM

ASKING FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN THE CHALLENGING YEARS AHEAD.

NOW I WOULD BE GLAD TO RESPOND TO YOUR

QUESTIONS.

END OF TEXT