The original documents are located in Box 35, “7/1/76 - Remarks at the Opening of the Historic Centennial Safe in Statuary Hall” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS AT OPENING OF CENTENNIAL SAFE

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 1976
THANK YOU, SENATOR MANSFIELD

MR. SPEAKER

SENATOR PERCY

SENATOR BROOKE

CONGRESSWOMAN BOGGS

DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
I am honored to open this historic centennial safe.

It contains many items of interest to us today as we celebrate the completion of our second century. But it symbolizes much more than a valuable collection of mementos.
It symbolizes something about the United States of America that is so mighty and so inspiring that it cannot be locked up in a safe. I mean the American spirit.

When this safe was sealed, Americans looked forward to the future to this year of 1976.
THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN THEIR MINDS THAT A PRESIDENT OF A FREE
GOVERNMENT WOULD PARTICIPATE IN A CEREMONY HERE, IN THE
UNITED STATES CAPITOL BUILDING. JUST AS AMERICAN MEN AND
WOMEN 200 YEARS AGO LOOKED TO THE FUTURE, THOSE WHO SEALED
THIS SAFE 100 YEARS AGO LOOKED TO THE FUTURE. SO IT IS
WITH TODAY'S AMERICANS. BUT THERE IS NO SAFE BIG ENOUGH TO
CONTAIN THE HOPES, ENERGIES AND ABILITIES OF OUR PEOPLE.
OUR REAL NATIONAL TREASURE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY IN A SAFE OR A VAULT. AMERICA'S WEALTH IS NOT IN MATERIAL OBJECTS BUT IN OUR GREAT HERITAGE, OUR FREEDOM, AND IN OUR BELIEF IN OURSELVES.
A CENTURY AGO, THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES NUMBERED OVER 40 MILLION. TODAY, WE HAVE ABOUT FIVE TIMES AS MANY. BUT THE GROWTH OF OUR POPULATION HAS NOT LESSENED OUR DEVOTION TO THE PRINCIPLES THAT INSPIRED AMERICANS IN 1776 AND 1876.
IN 1876 OUR IMMENSE WEALTH, BOTH NATURAL AND INVENTIVE, COMMANDED WORLDWIDE ATTENTION. WE GREW FROM COAST TO COAST, IN GREATER INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT THAN HUMANITY HAD EVER KNOWN.
IN 1876 AMERICA WAS STILL EMERGING FROM A TERRIBLE FRATERNAL WAR. A LESSER PEOPLE MIGHT HAVE BEEN UNEQUAL TO THE CHALLENGE. BUT 1976 FINDS THE CONFIDENCE OF 1876 CONFIRMED.

TODAY, THERE IS FAR GREATER EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL OF OUR CITIZENS IN EVERY CORNER OF AMERICA.

THERE IS RISING PROSPERITY FOR OUR NATION AND PEACE AND PROGRESS FOR OUR PEOPLE.
WE LOOK BACK TO THE EVENING OF JULY 4, 1776.

IT WAS THEN, AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, THAT THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS RESOLVED THAT FRANKLIN, ADAMS, AND JEFFERSON BEGIN WORK ON A SEAL AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL. WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE FRONT OF THE GREAT SEAL.
BUT THE REVERSE SIDE, WHICH ALSO APPEARS ON EVERY DOLLAR BILL, IS TODAY ESPECIALLY INSTRUCTIVE. IT DEPICTS A PYRAMID WHICH IS NOT COMPLETED AND A SINGLE EYE GAZING OUT RADIANTLY. THE UNFINISHED PYRAMID REPRESENTS THE WORK THAT REMAINS FOR AMERICANS TO DO.
THE LATIN MOTTO BELOW IS FREELY TRANSLATED "GOD HAS
FAVORED OUR UNDERTAKING." TWO HUNDRED YEARS LATER,
WE KNOW HE HAS.
THOUGH WE MAY DIFFER, AS AMERICANS HAVE

THROUGHOUT THE PAST, WE SHARE A COMMON PURPOSE.

IT IS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A FUTURE IN KEEPING WITH OUR

GLORIOUS PAST. THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC PROVIDES FOR

CONTINUED GROWTH THROUGH A CONVERGENCE OF VIEWS AND

INTERESTS. BUT THAT GROWTH MUST BE SPIRITUAL AS WELL

AS MATERIAL.
AS WE LOOK INSIDE THIS SAFE, LET US LOOK INSIDE Ourselves. Let us look into our hearts and hopes.
ON SUNDAY WE START A NEW CENTURY, A CENTURY OF

THE INDIVIDUAL. WE HAVE GIVEN MEANING TO OUR LIFE AS

A NATION. LET US NOW WELCOME A CENTURY IN WHICH WE

GIVE NEW MEANING TO OUR LIVES AS INDIVIDUALS. LET US

LOOK INSIDE OURSELVES TO UNLEASH THE GOD-GIVEN TREASURES

STORED WITHIN.
AND LET US LOOK OUTSIDE OURSELVES TO THE NEEDS OF
OUR FAMILIES, OUR FRIENDS, OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR
NATION, AND OUR MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

I WILL NOW OPEN THE SAFE.

END OF TEXT