

The original documents are located in Box 36, “7/4/76 - Remarks on the Spirit of Sacrifice at Valley Forge State Park, Valley Forge, PA” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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• THANK YOU, GOV. SHAPP

• SEN. SCOTT

• SEN SCHWEIKER

• GOV RAY

• CONG. SCHULZE

• ~~LT. GOV. KLINE~~

• SEC. KLEPPE

• ADMINISTRATOR WARNER

• REV. CLERGY

• DISTINGUISHED GUESTS / LADIES + GENTLEMEN

Schools

Cong. Murtha

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE -- PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS
AT VALLEY FORGE -- JULY 4, 1976

THEY CAME HERE IN THE SNOWS OF WINTER OVER A TRAIL

MARKED WITH THE BLOOD OF THEIR RAG-BOUND FEET•

THE IRON FORGE THAT GAVE THIS PLACE ITS NAME HAD BEEN

DESTROYED BY THE BRITISH WHEN GENERAL WASHINGTON AND HIS

RAGGED CONTINENTAL ARMY ENCAMPED HERE, EXHAUSTED,

OUTNUMBERED AND SHORT OF EVERYTHING EXCEPT FAITH.

~~THE~~ WE GATHER HERE TODAY, THE 200th ANNIVERSARY OF OUR
INDEPENDENCE, TO COMMEMORATE THEIR SACRIFICES EVEN BEFORE
WE CELEBRATE THE GLORIOUS DECLARATION.

AMERICANS WILL REMEMBER THE NAME OF VALLEY FORGE AS
LONG AS THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE LIVES WITHIN THEIR HEARTS.

HERE THE VEIN OF IRON IN OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER WAS
FORGED. IN THE 18th CENTURY, THE COLONIAL AMERICAN WAS
FAR MORE FREE AND PROSPEROUS THAN HIS EUROPEAN COUSIN.

ENGLISHMEN REGARDED US WITH SOME ENVY AS APPROPRIATE

SUBJECTS TO SHARE THEIR GRINDING TAX BURDENS.

AFTER CONCORD BRIDGE AND BREED'S HILL, THE BRITISH
GENERALS WERE ~~SOMEWHAT~~ IMPRESSED WITH OUR MARKSMANSHIP
AND FIGHTING SPIRIT, BUT THEY STILL DISMISSED WASHINGTON'S
MILITIAMEN AS "A RABBLE IN ARMS."

MANY YEARS LATER, WHEN HE WAS 91, A VETERAN OF CONCORD
WAS INTERVIEWED AND ASKED WHY HE TOOK UP HIS RIFLE AGAINST

HIS KING. DID HE FEEL INTOLERABLY OPPRESSED?

NOPE. NEVER PAID A PENNY FOR ONE OF THEM STAMPS.

NEVER DRANK ANY TEA.

NEVER HEARD OF LOCKE; / ONLY READ THE BIBLE AND THE ALMANAC. //

WELL THEN, WHAT DID ALL THE FIGHTING MEAN?

"YOUNG MAN," THE AGING REVOLUTIONARY SAID FIRMLY.

"WHAT WE MEANT IN GOING FOR THOSE REDCOATS WAS THIS:

had always
WE ~~ALWAYS HAD~~ GOVERNED OURSELVES, AND WE ALWAYS MEANT

TO."

"THEY DIDN'T MEAN WE SHOULD."

WITHOUT JEFFERSON'S ELOQUENCE, THOSE ARE THE WORDS OF THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE'S DECLARATION OF OUR INDEPENDENCE. THAT WAS
THE STRAIGHT TALK THAT BROUGHT SOME ELEVEN THOUSAND ORDINARY
AMERICANS, FARMERS, WORKERS, TRADESMEN, ^{and} SHOPKEEPERS, INTO
THIS VALLEY OF SACRIFICE IN THE BITTER WINTER OF 1777.

UNCOUNTED HUNDREDS WERE NEVER TO LEAVE.

THEY DID NOT DIE AMID THE ~~FURILING~~ BANNERS AND FEARFUL

SOUNDS OF BATTLE.

THEY WEAKENED SLOWLY AND

QUIETLY SUCCUMBED TO COLD, SICKNESS ~~AND~~ STARVATION.

YET THEIR COURAGE AND SUFFERING - / THOSE WHO SURVIVED

AS WELL AS THOSE WHO FELL / -- WERE NO LESS MEANINGFUL THAN

THE SACRIFICES OF THOSE WHO MANNED THE BATTLEMENTS OF BOSTON

AND SCALED THE PARAPETS OF YORKTOWN•

IN THE BATTLE AGAINST DESPAIR, WASHINGTON AND HIS

MEN KEPT FREEDOM'S LONELY VIGIL. THE LEADER AND THE LED

DREW STRENGTH AND HOPE FROM ONE ANOTHER. AROUND THE WINTER

CAMPFIRES THAT DOTTED THESE FIELDS THE FLAME OF LIBERTY WAS

SOMEHOW KEPT BURNING.

SOMETHING HAPPENED AT VALLEY FORGE.

THAT RAGGED, STARVING ARMY HERE EMERGED AND CHANGED IN

A WAY THAT CAN BE SENSED BUT NEVER FULLY DESCRIBED. THEY

SUFFERED, \ THEY TRAINED, \ THEY TOUGHENED, \ THEY BURIED THEIR DEAD,

AND THEY STAYED. THEY STUCK IT OUT.

WHEN SPRING MELTED THE SNOWS AND GREEN RETURNED TO THIS
BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE, A PROUD AND DISCIPLINED FIGHTING FORCE
MARCHED OUT OF THIS VALLEY ~~[ON THE ROAD]~~ TO VICTORY, INTO THE
PAGES OF HISTORY, UNAWARE OF THE GREATNESS THEY HAD DONE AND
OBLIVIOUS TO OUR GRATITUDE.

AS ABRAHAM LINCOLN NOTED LONG AFTERWARDS AT ANOTHER
SACRED SITE IN PENNSYLVANIA, NOTHING WE CAN SAY HERE TODAY
CAN FURTHER CONSECRATE OR HALLOW THIS GROUND.

BUT WE CAN REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

SHOWN AT VALLEY FORGE, GETTYSBURG, ^{the} ARGONNE FOREST,
ANZIO BEACH AND IWO JIMA.

NOT ALL SACRIFICES ARE MADE IN WAR.

THERE ARE ALSO

SACRIFICES OF PEACE.

THE STURDY WAGON TRAINS THAT HAVE RETURNED HERE, THE
WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO DROVE THEM / AND THOSE ALONG THE WAY WHO
REDEDICATED THEMSELVES TO THE GREAT PRINCIPLES OF THE DECLARATION
OF INDEPENDENCE, / OFFER HEARTWARMING PROOF THAT OUR AMERICAN
ADVENTURE HAS ~~REALLY~~ JUST BEGUN•

OUR BICENTENNIAL IS THE HAPPY BIRTHDAY OF ALL 50 STATES,

A COMMONWEALTH AND SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES. IT IS NOT

JUST A CELEBRATION FOR THE ORIGINAL 13 COLONIES. AMERICANS

ARE ONE PEOPLE, AND WE CAN STILL HEAR THEM SAYING:

have always
"WE ~~ALWAYS~~ HAVE GOVERNED OURSELVES, AND WE ALWAYS

MEAN TO."

THE EARLIEST ENGLISH SETTLERS CARRIED THE BIBLE AND
BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC AMONG THEIR FEW
PRECIOUS POSSESSIONS, AND ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN SELF-
GOVERNMENTS ON A STRANGE AND HOSTILE COAST•

AMERICAN FAMILIES IN PRAIRIE SCHOONERS LIKE THESE TOOK WITH
THEM ON THE OVERLAND TRAILS THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY AND THE
GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

THEIR RESTLESS SEARCH FOR A BETTER LIFE WAS BEGUN IN THE
SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE.

BUT IT WAS THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE THAT SUSTAINED THEM.

THEY ~~TOO~~ SUFFERED CRUEL WINTERS, SAVAGE ATTACKS, BLAZING
DESERTS AND BLOODY FEET. MANY WERE BURIED BESIDE THE TRAIL.

BUT MANY ~~WERE~~ STUCK IT OUT, DUG IN AND BUILT PERMANENT
SETTLEMENTS, WHERE WOMEN STOOD THE SAME SENTRY DUTY AS THE
MEN. IN THE WEST, THE DECLARATION'S PROMISE OF LEGAL AND
POLITICAL EQUALITY FOR WOMEN WAS FIRST BROADENED.

THE AMERICAN PIONEERS KNEW THAT IN THEIR NEW WILDERNESS

HOMES THEY WOULD NOT BE COLONIALS, RULED BY A DISTANT

GOVERNMENT. THEY HAD ASSURANCE THAT, IN DUE COURSE, THEY

COULD GOVERN THEMSELVES AS FULL CITIZENS OF EQUAL STATES.

THIS POLITICAL GUARANTEE MADE ALL THE RISKS AND SACRIFICES

WORTHWHILE. THEIR CHILDREN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS WOULD

HAVE ALL THE RIGHTS OF WASHINGTON, JACKSON AND LINCOLN.

~~AND~~ SO DO WE - AND MORE.

AS WE CONTINUE OUR AMERICAN ADVENTURE, THE PATRIOTS
OF VALLEY FORGE AND THE PIONEERS OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER,
INDEED ALL OUR HEROES AND HEROINES OF WAR AND PEACE, SEND US
THIS SINGLE URGENT MESSAGE:

THOUGH PROSPERITY IS A GOOD THING, THOUGH COMPASSIONATE

CHARITY IS A GOOD THING, THOUGH INSTITUTIONAL REFORM IS A

GOOD THING, A NATION SURVIVES ONLY SO LONG AS THE SPIRIT

OF SACRIFICE AND SELF-DISCIPLINE IS STRONG WITHIN ITS PEOPLE•

INDEPENDENCE HAS TO BE DEFENDED AS WELL AS DECLARED;

FREEDOM IS ALWAYS WORTH FIGHTING FOR; AND LIBERTY ULTIMATELY

BELONGS ~~ONLY~~ TO THOSE WILLING TO SUFFER FOR IT.

IF WE REMEMBER THIS, WE CAN BRING HEALTH WHERE THERE
IS ~~TO~~ DISEASE, PEACE WHERE THERE IS STRIFE, PROGRESS WHERE
THERE IS POVERTY AND WANT.

AND WHEN OUR TRICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION ROLLS AROUND,
100 YEARS FROM NOW, GRATEFUL AMERICANS ~~STILL~~ WILL COME TO
THIS SHRINE OF QUIET VALOR, THIS FORGE OF OUR REPUBLIC'S
IRON CORE.

END OF TEXT