

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 27, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
OFFICIALS OF THE TOWN OF HOPKINTON, RHODE ISLAND
UPON PRESENTATION OF
THE HAPPY BICENTENNIAL AMERICA SONG

THE ROSE GARDEN

8:45 A.M. EDT

MR. HAMMOND: President Ford, I have here a letter that was drafted and it reads: "Dear Mr. President, we, the undersigned residents of Hopkinton, Rhode Island," and we have written in, "and vicinity" -- (Laughter) -- "joined a Happy Bicentennial America. delegation to the White House in wishing you and your family good health and happiness. Respectfully yours."

We have circulated this through our schools, and if you look through just a couple of pages, we have some very small children that did quite a job on this. But there are about a thousand signatures in here and I would like to present this to you as a token from the Town of Hopkinton and thank you very much for this day.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mr. Hammond, and I also thank Senator Pastore and Congressman Beard and all of you for coming down here. You brought the sunshine this morning. (Laughter)

For that we are very grateful, but, also, Mrs. Ford and myself, as well as the children, thank you very much for this expression of good health and best wishes.

I had the opportunity of being in Rhode Island about three weeks ago and the people of Rhode Island were extremely hospitable and friendly and for that I will thank them through you, if you don't mind.

You are all dressed here in costumes of the earlier days of our great country. Rhode Island played a very significant part in making this country what it is today. Your predecessors were among the early settlers and the year-to-year contribution of Rhode Island has been very meaningful in making America a great country.

MORE

I have always enjoyed the opportunity to visit in Rhode Island. I can't honestly say I have been to Hopkinton. (Laughter)

MR. HAMMOND: Not many people can. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: But, obviously, it is a great community, with a wonderful spirit, and fine people. I think it is a great idea that you are thinking Bicentennial and making it something meaningful to the young people as well as a couple of older ones.

The Bicentennial should be a great year in the United States. We have to show what we have done for 200 years in order to give inspiration to the young people to do what they have to do in the third century. They have an obligation, just as their forefathers had, and I have great faith in the young people today represented by this group that they will do as well, if not better, than we did.

MR. HAMMOND: I hope so. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much.

MR. HAMMOND: Now, this is Mr. Nathan Kaye. He is connected with the Hopkinton Bicentennial Commission. As a matter of fact, he is the one that contacted our office and made this day possible.

MR. KAYE: Mr. President, the Hopkinton, Rhode Island Town Council and its Happy Bicentennial America Committee are greatly honored to present to you this song, "Happy Bicentennial America." Thanks to you and anticipating the help of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, we hope that this song will be sung by our citizens loudly and proudly, Happy Bicentennial America.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, sir. Can I hear the song?

MR. KAYE: Yes, sir. They are going to sing it. (Laughter)

(The children sang the song.)

MR. KAYE: Mr. President, he has a tape recording of the song.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, thank you very, very much, sir.

May I have my picture taken with all of these children?

MR. KAYE: Surely.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. It has been a pleasure. It is a nice way to start a Saturday morning.